

THE DIAL

OCTOBER 1920

UNDER THE DOME

BY WALDO FRANK

They were two figures under the grey of the Dome . . . two straight faint figures of black: they were a man and woman with heads bowed, straight . . . under the surge of the Dome.

I

Friday night, when always he broke away in order to pray in the *Schul*, and when she sat in the shop and had to speak with the customers who came, these praying hours of Friday night. *Shabbas* morning at least he did not go also.—My heart tells me it is wrong. Lord, forgive me for Esther and for my little girl. Lord, you know it is for them I do not go to *Schul* on *Shabbas* morning. . . . But by God, you will keep the store those two hours Friday! Do you hear? By God, what else have I ever asked you for? Don't you sit around, do nothing all the day, and aren't Flora's clothes a filth? and hardly if you'll cook our meals. But this you will do: this you will do! Friday nights. Lord, why is there no light in Esther? What have I done, Lord? what have I not done?

She sat in a chair, always, near the side wall: her eyes lay burning against the cold glare of the gas.

Above her shoulder on the wall was a large sheet of fashions: women with wasp waists, smirking, rolling: stiff men, all clothes, with little heads. Under the table—where Meyer sits with his big feet so much to look at—Flora played, a soiled bundle, with a ball of yarn and a huge gleaming scizzors.—No one perhaps

comes, and then I do not mind sitting and keeping the store. I saw a dead horse in the street. . . . A dead horse, two days dead, rotting and stiff. Against the grey of the living street, a livid dead horse: a hot stink was his cold death against the street's clean-ness. There are two little boys, wrapped in blue coat, blue muffler, leather caps. They stand, above the gaunt head of the horse and sneer at him. His flank rises red and huge. His legs are four strokes away from life. He is dead. The naughty boys pick up bricks. They stand, very close, above the head of the horse. They hurl down a brick. It strikes the horse's skull, falls sharp away. They hurl down a brick. It cuts the swollen nostril, falls soft away. The horse does not mind, the horse does not hurt. He is dead.

—Go away, you two! Throwing stones at a dead horse! Go away, I say! How would you like . . . When one is dead, stones strike one's skull and fall sharp away, one is moveless. When one is dead, stones strike the soft of one's throat and fall soft away, one is hurtless. When one is dead one does not hurt.

She sat and turned her eyes away from her child. Flora had smear on her face; her hands were grimed with the floor. One of her stockings was down: her little white knee was going to scrape on the floor, be black before it was bloody. So . . . A long shining table under a cold gas spurt. A store with clothes and a stove: no place for herself. A row of suits, all pressed and stiff with Meyer's diligence. A pile of suits, writhed with the wear of men, soiled, crumpled with traffic of streets, with bending of bodies in toil, in eating, in loving perhaps. Grimed living suits. Meyer takes an iron and it steams and it presses hard, it sucks up the grime. It sucks out the life from the suit. The suit is stiff and dead, now, ready to go once more over the body of a man and suck to itself his life.

The automatic bell clangs. There in the open door was a dark tall woman—customer.

Esther stood, too. She felt she was shorter and less tidy: more beautiful though.

Two women across the tailor-shop, seeing each other.

"I came for my husband's—for Mr Breddan's dress suit. Mr Lanich told him it would be ready at seven?"

Esther Lanich moved, Sophie Breddan stood. Between slow

dark curve, swift dark stroke of these two women, under a tailor's table the burn of a dirty child, mumbling intent with scizzors between her soiled frail legs, at play with loose hair.

"Is this the one?"

The curve and the stroke came near across the table.

"Yes."

Eyes met.—She is tidy and fresh, less beautiful, though, than I. She has no child. She has a flat with Sun and a swell husband who wears a swallow-tail and takes her out to parties. She has a diamond ring, her corsets are sweet. She has things to put into her time like candies into her mouth, like loved kisses into my mouth. She is all new with her smooth skin going below the collar of her suit.

—She has a child, and she lets her play dirty with scizzors under a tailor table. "How much is it?" . . . After a decent bedtime.

—Does she think I care about this? "Oh, no hurry. Better come in and pay my—Mr Lanich. Any time."

The clang of the bell.

Esther is seated. Her gray tilted eyes seem sudden to stand upon the farther wall of her husband's shop, and to look upon her. Her eyes speak soft warm words that touch her hair, touch her lips, lie like caressing fingers upon the soft cloth that lies upon her breast.

—Less beautiful than I, though. My flesh is soft and sweet, it is the colour of cream. What for? My hair is like an autumn tree gleaming with sun. I can let it fall through the high channel of my breast against my stomach that does not bulge but lies soft and low like a cushion of silk. What for? My eyes see beauty. What for? O there is no God. If there is God, what for? . . . He will come back and work. He will eat and work. He is kind and good. What for? When he is excited with love, doesn't he make an ugly noise with his nose? What else does he make with his love? . . . Another like Flora? God forbid. What for?

She did not pull down the wide yellow shade, though it was night. The street was a ribbon of velvet blackness laid beside the hurting and sharp brightness of the store. The yellow light was hard like grains of sand under the quick of her nails. She was afraid of the street. She was hurt in the store. But the

brightness clamped her. She did not move.—O let no more customers come! “Keep quiet, Flora.” I can not move.—She was clamped.

But the store moved, moved.

There was a black wheel with a gleaming axle—the Sun—that sent light dimming down its spokes as it spun. From the rim of the wheel where it was black, bright dust flung away as it spun. The store was a speck of bright dust. It flung straight. It moved along the velvet path of the street, touching, not merging with its night. It moved, it moved, she sat still in its moving. The store caught up with Meyer. He entered the store. He was there. He was there, scooped up from the path of the street by the store. Now her work was over. He was there. The store was a still store, fixed in a dirty house. Its brightness the spurt of two jets of gas. He was back from *Schul*.—That is all.

A man with blond hair, flat feet that shuffled, small tender hands. A man with a mouth gentle, slow; with eyes timid to see. “Come dear: that is no place.”—Why she lets the child play with my shears!

Tender hands pull Flora from beneath the table. Flora comes blinking, unprotesting. Where her father’s hands leave off from her, she stays. She sinks back to the floor. She looks at her little fists from which the scizzors are gone. She misses hard gleaming steel. She opens and shuts her fists and looks at them: she cries. But she does not move. . . . Her mother does not move. . . . Her father does not move. He squats on the table. His head sways with his thoughts. He knows that Flora will stop. . . . what can he do? . . . in perhaps half an hour. It is a weak cry. Grows weaker. He is used to it. There is work.

He sews. ‘A woman of valour who can find? For her price is far above rubies’ . . . She will stay here, stay here silent. Flora should be in bed. Who to put his child in bed? Hard gas-light on her beloved hair? A wither, a wilt . . . ‘She is like the merchant ships; she bringeth her food from afar’. . . He sews and rips. —What, Lord, have I left undone? I love my Esther. . . . He sews.—I love my little girl. Lord, I fear the Lord . . . ‘She looketh well to the ways of the household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.’—Lighten me, Lord, give me light. There is my daugh-

ter crying, who should sleep: and my wife sitting, who will not, who will never without me go home. She is afraid. She says she is afraid. She is sullen and silent. She is so fair and sweet against my heart. Lord! why did her hands that held my head speak a lie? and her silent lips that she let press upon my mouth, why were they lies? Lord, I can not understand. Lord, I pray. I must sew bread for Esther and for my child. I go to *Schul* at least once each *Shabbas*, Lord . . . Do I not fill the deep ten Penitential Days from *Rosh Ha Shonoh* to *Yom Ha Kippurim* with seeking out of heart? . . . He sews, he rips. The weeping of his child is done. Long stitches, here. She has found a chair's leg to play with. Her moist fingers clasp at the shrill wood. The wooden chair and her soft flesh wrestle. Esther sits still. He sews.

'Her children arise, and call her blessed;
Her husband also, and he praiseth her ;
—Many daughters have done valiantly,
But thou excellest them all.—
Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain;
But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands;
And let her works praise her in the gates.'

II

In the door and the clang again of the bell, a boy with them. A boy they knew—son of their neighbours—big for his years and heavy, with fat lips, eyes clouded, hair black and low over his clouded eyes. Esther alone saw, as he lurched in, one foot dragging always slightly.

He went for little Flora with no greeting for them: familiarly as he knew he would find her, had come so, often.—He loves her. The man who squats on the table and sews smiles on the boy who loves and plays with his child.

"Hello, kid," voice of a thick throat, "look—what I got for you here."

Flora lets the chair of her late love lurch against her back,

strike her forward. She does not care. She watches two hands—grey-caked over red—unwrap from paper a dazzle of colours, place it to her eyes on the floor, pull with a string: it has little wheels, it moves!

"Quackle-duck," he announces.

Flora spreads out her hands, sinks on her rump, feels its green head that bobs with purple bill, feels its yellow tail.

"Quackle-duck—yours," says the boy.

She takes the string from his hand. With shoulder and stomach she swings her arm backward and pulls. The duck spurts, bobbing its green long head against her leg.

She plays. The boy on his knees with soiled thick drawers showing between his stockings and his pants plays with her. . . .

Meyer Lanich did not cease from work, nor his woman from silence. His face was warm in pleasure, watching his child who had a toy and a playmate.—I am all warm and full of love for Herbert Rabinowich: perhaps some day I can show him, or do something for his father? Now there was no way but to go on working, and smile so the pins in his mouth did not prick.

The eyes of Esther drew a line from these two children back to the birth of the one that was hers. She dwelt in a world about the bright small room like the night: in a world that roared and wailed, that reeled with despair of her hope.

She had borne this dirty child all clean beneath her heart. Her belly was sweet and white, it had borne her: her breasts were high and proud, they had emptied, they had come to sag for this dirty child on the floor—face and red lips on a floor that any shoes might step.

Had she not borne a Glory through the world, bearing this stir of perfect flesh? Had she not borne a Song through the harsh City? Had she not borne another mite of pain, another fleck of dirt upon the City's shame-heaps?

She lies in her bed burned in sweet pain. Pain wrings her body, wrings her soul like the word of the Lord within lips of Deborah. Her bed with white sheets, her bed with its pool of blood is an altar where she lays forth her Glory which she has walking carried like a Song through the harsh City.—What have I mothered but dirt? . . .

A transfigured world she knows she will soon see. Yes: it is

a flat of little light—and the bugs seep in from the other flats no matter how one cleans—it is a man of small grace, it is a world of few windows. But her child will be borne to smite life open wide. Her child shall leap above its father and its mother as the sun above forlorn fields. . . . She arose from her bed. She held her child in her arms. She walked through the reeling block with feet aflame. She entered the shop. . . . There—squatting with feet so wide to see—her man: his needle pressed by the selfsame finger. The world was not changed for her child. Behold her child changing—let her sit for ever upon her seat of tears—let her lay like fire to her breast this endless vision of her child changing unto the world. . . .

—I have no voice, I have no eyes. I am a woman who
has lain with the world.

The world's voice upon my lips gave my mouth gladness.

The world's arms about my flanks gave my flesh glory.

I was big with gladness and glory.

Joyful I lost in love of my vision my eyes, in love of my
song my voice.

I have borne another misery into the world. . . .

Meyer Lanich moves, putting away the trousers he has patched.
—O Lord, why must I sew so many hours in order to reap my pain? Why must I work so long, heap the hard wither of so many hours upon my child who can not sleep till I do, in order that all of us may be unhappy?

The clang and the door open. The mother of the boy.

"Oh, here you are! Excuse me, friends. I was worrying over Herbert. . . . Well, how goes it?"

She smiled and stepped into the room: saw them all.

"All well, Mrs Rabinowich," said Meyer. "We are so glad when your Herbert comes to play with Florchen."

Mrs Rabinowich turns the love of her face upon the children who do not attend her. A grey long face, bitterly pock-marked, in a glow of love.

"Look what your Herbert brought her," Meyer sews and smiles.

"A toy. He shouldn't, now. Such a thing costs money."

Mrs Rabinowich puts an anxious finger to her lips.

"Don't," she whispers. "If he wants to, he should. It is lovely that he wants to. There's money enough for such lovely wants. . . . Well, Darling. Won't you come home to bed?"

Herbert does not attend.

His mother sighed—a sigh of great appeasement and of content.—This is my son! She turned to where Esther sat with brooding eyes. Her face was serious now, grey ever, warm with a grey sorrow. Her lips moved: they knew not what to say.

"How are you, Esther?"

"Oh, I am well, Mrs Rabinowich. Thank you." A voice resonant and deep, a voice mellowed by long keeping in the breast of a woman.

"Why don't you come round, some time, Esther? You know, I should always be so glad to see you."

"Thank you, Mrs Rabinowich."

"You know—we're just next door," the older woman smiled. "You got time, I think. More time, than I."

"Oh, she got time all right!" The sharp words flash from the soft mouth of Meyer, who sews and seems in no way one with the sharp words of his mouth. Esther does not look. She takes the words as if like stones they had fallen in her lap. She smiles away. She is still. And Lotte Rabinowich is still, looking at her with a deep wonder, shaking her head, unappeased in her search.

She turns at last to her boy: relieved.

"Come Herbert, now. Now we really got to go."

She takes his hand that he lets limply rise. She pulls him gently.

"Good night, dear ones. . . . Do come, some time, Esther—yes?"

"Thank you, Mrs Rabinowich."

Meyer says: "Let the boy come when he wants. We love to have him."

His mother smiles.—Of course: who would not love to have him? Good heart, fine boy, dear child. "It's long past bedtime. Naughty!" She kisses him.

Herbert, a little like a horse, swings away his heavy head.

They are gone in the bell's jangle.

"What a good boy: what a big-hearted boy!" Meyer said aloud. "I like the boy. He will be strong and a success, you see."

Her words "I saw him lift the skirt of Flora and peep up" she could not utter. She was silent, seeing the dull boy with the dirty mind, and his mother and Meyer through love thinking him good. What she saw in her silence hurt her.

Her hurt flowed out in fear. She saw her child: a great fear came on Esther.—Flora is small and white, the world is full of men with thick lips, hairy hands, of men who will lift her skirt and kiss her, of men who will press their hairiness against her whiteness.

—There is a Magic, Love, whereby this shame is sweet. Where is it? A world of men with hair and lips against her whiteness. Where is the magic against them? Esther was very afraid. She hated her daughter.

III

Meyer Lanich came down from his table and drew down the wide yellow shade and shut out the night. No more stray customers to enter. He turned the key of the door. He had his back to the door, seeing his work and his child who now sat vacant upon the floor and grimed her eyes with her fists too sleepy to hunt play—seeing his wife. He sought to see this woman who was his wife. To this end came his words, old words, old words he had tried often, often failed with, words that would come again since they were the words of his seeking to find the woman his wife.

"Esther," he said, "it is nine o'clock and I have much work to do—a couple of hours of work. . . ."—I could work faster alone, it will be midnight so with this pain for ever in my eyes. "Esther won't you go home and put Florchen to bed?"

She looked at him with her full lovely eyes. Why since he saw them lovely could he not see them loving? He had said these words before, so often before. She looked at him.

"Esther," he said, "it is bad for a baby of four to be up so late. It is bad for her to sit around on the floor under the gas—smelling the gas and the gasoline and the steam of the clothes. Can't you consider Flora?"

"I am afraid."

"What is there to be afraid of? Can't you see? Why aren't

you afraid of what will happen to Flora? Eh—that don't frighten you, does it? She's a baby. If my Mother could see . . ."

"Meyer, I can't. Meyer, I can't. You know that I can't."

He waved his hands. She was stiff. They came no nearer one to the other. About them each, two poles, swirled thoughts and feelings—a world that did not touch the other.

He clambered back to his work. The room was hot. The gas-light burred. Against his temples it beat harsh air, harsh light, the acrid smells of his work—against her temples.

Esther sat. The words of her man seeking the woman she was had not found for him but had stirred her. Her breast moved fast, but all else of her was stiff. Stiff, all she moved like a thick river drawn against its flow, drawn mounting to its head.—I can not go home alone, to the empty hall alone, into the black rooms alone. Against their black the flicker of a match that may go out, the dare of a gas-light that is all white and shrieking with its fear of the black world it is in. She could not go home alone.—For, Esther, in your loneliness you will find your life. I am afraid of my life.

She was caught, she was trapped.—I am miserable. Let me only not move. . . . Since to move was to break against walls of a trap. Here in the heart of movelessness a little space. Let her not stir where the walls and the roof of the black small trap will smite her!

IV

The room moves up the dimension of time. Hour and hour and hour. Bearing its freight toward sleep. Thick hot room, torn by the burr of two lights, choked by the strain of two bound souls, moving along the night. Writhing in dream. Singing. . . .

—My flesh sings for silk and rich jewels;
My flesh cries for the mouth of a king.
My hair, why is it not a canopy of love,
Why does it not cover sweet secrets of love?
My hair cries to be laid upon white linen.
I have brought misery into the world. . . .

I have lived with a small man and my dreams have
shrunk him,

Who in my dreams enlarged the glory of princes.

He looks upon me with soft eyes, and my flesh is hard
against them.

He beats upon me with warm heart, and my breasts do not
rise up for him.

They are soft and forgetful of his beating heart.

My breasts dream far when he is near to them . . .
They droop, they die.

His hands are a tearful prayer upon my body . . .

I sit: there is no way between my man and my dream,

There is no way between my life and life,

There is no way between my love and my child.

I lie: and my eyes are shut. I sleep: and they open.

A world of mountains

Plunges against my sleep. . . .

—Lord, Lord: this is my daughter before me, her cheeks that
have not bloomed are wilting. Preserve her, Lord. This is my
wife before me, her love that has not lived is dead. . . . Time is
a barren field that has no end. I see no horizon. My feet walk
endlessly, I see no horizon. . . . I am faithful, Lord. . . .

The tailor-shop is black. It has moved up three hours into mid-
night. It is black.

Esther and Meyer walk the grey street. In the arms of the man
sleeps Flora. His arm aches. He dares not change her to his
other arm. Lest she wake.

He has undressed her. Gentle hands of a man. He holds her
little body, naked, near his eyes. Her face and her hands, her feet
and her knees are soiled. The rest of her body is white—very
white—no bloom upon her body. He kisses her black hair.

He lays her away beneath her coverlet.

There is his wife before him. She is straight. Her naked body
rises, column of white flame, from her dun skirt. Esther—his love
—she is in a case of fire. Within her breasts as within hard jewels
move the liquids of love. Within her body, as within a case, lies

her soul, pent, which should pour forth its warmth upon them.

He embraces her.

"Esther. . . . Esther" He can say no more.

His lips are at her throat. Can he not break her open?

She sways back, yielding. Her eyes swerve up. They catch the cradle of her child.

—Another child another agony of glory another misery to the world?

She is stiff in the unbroken case of a vast wound all about her.

So they lie down in bed. So they sleep.

She has cooked their breakfast.

They walk, a man and a woman, down the steep street to work.
A child between them, holding the hand of a man.

They are grey, they are sullen. They are caught up in the sullen strife of their relentless life. There is no let to them. Time is a barren field with no horizon.

BREAKERS

BY LEGARE GEORGE

A white tumult,
Flashing and tumbling,
Writhing over black, drenched rocks.

On the beach
They run up to a lapping thinness—
Quicksilver circling to nothingness
Over hard sand.

They slide back,
Sibilant,
Bubbled to foam,
With a vague sigh
Subsiding.

THE APPROACH TO M. MARCEL PROUST

BY RICHARD ALDINGTON

WHEN we speak of literary filiation we have frequently to make quite considerable mental reservations in the use of the term, for it is not so much the mere game of tracing influences which is involved as the implied definition of the artist's status, his relation not to the men of his own period but to his illustrious predecessors. Conducted with tact, the investigation is a kind of criticism; it is at any rate a first means of approach. In the case of quite definitely minor intelligences—a Dowson or a Collins or, to be a little classically pedantic, a Calpurnius Siculus—men who have simply found a nugget or two in a mine previously worked by a more competent hand; in such a case we can hardly talk of literary filiation in the precise sense. Here, if it is not a matter of imitation "pure and simple," it is at least a case where the smaller mind is self-ranked as such by its almost dazzled yielding to the greater. And in the case of sturdier minds which have achieved a certain something which we yet know almost by instinct to be devoid of distinction—a Wells or a Bourget—here again our filiation is of small importance. It is like trying to persuade ourselves that an agreeable *parvenu* has the surface, the inimitable manner of some finished example, of the centuries' selection. But apply the method to an *écrivain de race*, one who at least appears to be in the grand line, and the result is illuminating. Either we find that our subject is not quite so fine as our enthusiasm proposed, a little uneasy among the permanent residents of Parnassus, or we discover that we have put down the outline of a critical sketch. To establish these relationships, these spiritual ancestries as it were, is as important to the student of literature as the correct tracing of family descents is to an enthusiastic genealogist. Of course no contemporary author can appear to us with the prestige of those whose memories have suffered from generations of incense burners, just as a Howard to-day is not the same thing as a Howard of the sixteenth century. But the mere fact of noting the filiation has its uses if only those of introduction and

of avoiding the merely uncomparative method of criticism which leaves one wondering whether the superlatives are superlatives or only politenesses. It means that we are judging an artist by his peers and implies the compliment that we consider the immortals as such. "Influences," as such, are uninteresting; but it is valuable to trace the main roots of a vigorous growth, or, to vary the metaphor, to select an artist's spiritual affinities, the minds he would frequent in some ideal Elysium of the Landor kind.

As an artist M. Proust does nothing without significance; or rather everything he does, even his use of the word "and," of a blank space, has a significance. His recent article on Flaubert in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* not only displayed a critical finesse which left one breathless but revealed the writer's own methods, inasmuch as he was doing startling things with prose and achieving unheard of subtleties. It is hardly fantastic to see in M. Proust's *Pastiches* not so much a set of parodies which would rank above even a brilliant book like *A Christmas Garland*, as a statement, oblique but unmistakable, of his literary filiation. There may be a further significance in the fact that this book is dedicated to an American, which is at least piquant and suggestive. I feel almost sure that in publishing these elaborate essays in the styles of his predecessors—pastiches which are at once a criticism and an homage—M. Proust had the intention of showing us a few of the writers from the study of whom he has built up his own unique style and something of the fabric of his thought. Balzac, Flaubert, Sainte-Beuve, Henri de Régnier, the Goncourts, Michelet, Faguet, Renan, and Saint-Simon—this is at once a formidable list of "great names" and, if the phrase may be used without impropriety, a somewhat heterogeneous paternity for an artist. Yet the list is by no means complete, for we must add to it the name of an Englishman—let the super-modern reader prepare to start—John Ruskin, and probably Chateaubriand and Mallarmé.

I see I was right to speak of that list as "formidable," not because of the implied pretentiousness, but because of the very elaborate analyses which would become necessary if these relationships were minutely discussed. The responsibility may be thrown on M. Proust; he is not only an elaborate artist but the cause of elaboration in others. His work is perhaps the most complex literary "problem" of this decade; it is certainly the most

fascinating. But I can do no more than hint at the immense opportunities for literary analysis which I see in this problem. To pursue them at all far would involve me in endless subtleties. Yet one or two suggestions may be usefully made.

It will be noted that only five of the first ten artists named were novelists; the others were historians, critics, philosophers, and writers of memoirs. This is significant, for if M. Proust is first of all a novelist of tremendous ability he is also an acute critic, a philosopher in morals, and a writer of contemporary history. His work is the first attempt at a synthesis of modern European civilization, localized at a point of intensity. It is this attempt (and its success) one of the many motives of the million word *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* which gives the volumes which have appeared their first startling importance. The book has so many roots, so many intentions; it is packed so full of meaning, of thought and observation; that it is a kind of literature in itself.

The writer of memoirs, of contemporary social history, is conspicuous in M. Proust. If this side of varied talent links him partly to Balzac it also proves a closer filiation with Saint-Simon. It is not the modern habit of decrying Balzac which causes me to set M. Proust above him in this particular; it is because M. Proust has a conception of the art which places him, lower indeed than Saint-Simon, but in Saint-Simon's class. Balzac too often wrote as a woman acts; from intuition. His observations on social life, his attempts at an epitome of the civilization he lived in, are generally brilliant guesses, sometimes rather ridiculous guesses. Saint-Simon, with his more restricted purpose, enjoyed the advantages of really knowing the life he described and the characters he analysed. The creative value of his work is not greater than Balzac's, it is not even more voluminous, but it has that sense of reality which is the gift of intimacy alone (in comparison with which Balzac's writing appears like that of an art-critic insufficiently educated in pictures), it has so many of those details and shades of meaning which are the life of memoirs. To speak of Saint-Simon in the terms of a French Pepys, as an English critic recently did, is an enormity of bad taste and insensitiveness. The likeness is that of a well to a lake. M. Proust, with his extreme sensitiveness in critical perceptions, understands perfectly the significance of Saint-Simon as an artist, in sharp distinction to his significance

as an author of documents which time has invested with interest. M. Proust has studied and used Saint-Simon's methods in rendering his own observations of modern life. And merely because they are observations of modern life M. Proust's writings have a more intimate if less stately and imposing meaning for us. The complicated but perfectly controlled knowledge, the enthusiasm for a "situation" which Saint-Simon put into the discussion of some problem of precedence, some court manoeuvre, are devoted by M. Proust to the modern interests of psychological analysis, a nuance of sentiment, a delicate relationship, an appreciation of some fine distinction. When he describes so minutely the exact manner and air in which Swann raised his hat during a certain period of his life, or renders that amazing dinner-party with M. de Norpois, M. Proust is definitely doing for his age and generation what Saint-Simon did for his. The conditions, the "data," of the problem are all changed; the method is the same. It is M. Proust's misfortune that he is dealing in fact—in spite of certain exceptions which remain like fine old houses in a modern street—only with a luxurious bourgeoisie, preoccupied essentially with what is "chic" as distinct from what is really cultured. He feels the lack of an established aristocracy, which was so precious an asset to Saint-Simon. And inasmuch as M. Proust's own intelligence is aristocratic, he is an anachronism. He suffers in the same way as Renan, who could never find a place in an omnibus because he was too polite to precede another passenger. He lacks that ordered state of society where an exquisite refinement of this kind is forseen and compensated by privileges.

I do not wish to create the feeling that M. Proust is a pompous or intolerably refined person, though I can see a line of argument which could represent him merely as the most astonishing case of neurasthenia which ever existed. But in each case his manners are too good for him to be any of these. His sensitiveness, that habit of mind which can be described only by the misused "cultured," is something so intimate, so unforced and yet so controlled that the personality disengaged from his books becomes something typical and representative, an ideal presentation of the best in the old world as Whitman, in another sense, was of the new. The complaints directed against M. Proust's amorously detailed analyses and the inordinately long curves of his thought are unjustified. M.

Proust is neither a pompous nor a wordy writer. Unhesitatingly one can point to Flaubert as his closest predecessor and he shares with Flaubert that salt of irony which makes *Bouvard et Pécuchet* one of the world's great satires. M. Proust has assimilated Flaubert's methods and even refined on them. One can trace the Flaubert manner throughout his pages, not as an "influence" but as a similar habit of mind. In some respects even M. Proust's gigantic novel is a new, more detailed *Education Sentimentale*. M. Proust has a conception of his art as high as Flaubert's. Their minds are the same kind of diamond, but whereas Flaubert's was shaped in a few facets, M. Proust's glitters innumera- bly. He is in some respects a Flaubert indefinitely elaborated. And his highly complex form of narrative should have no difficulties for those who have assimilated *Ulysses* and *Mary Olivier* and *Miriam's* in- terminable impressions. M. Proust is more coherent than Mr Joyce, more urbane, less preoccupied with slops and viscera. His scale is more gigantic than anything Miss Sinclair has yet at- tempted. And he is not merely an impressionist like Miss Richar- dson. He can be an impressionist, a marvellous impressionist when necessary, he can use that almost fabulous virtuosity one admires in Miss Richardson's work, but he can do so many things more. You could furnish a new *Rochefoucauld* and another volume to *Montaigne* from his pages. With all one's admiration, one can not say that of Miss Richardson. And though M. Proust can describe a public convenience with a precision and verve which would have aroused the jealousy even of Flaubert, he is devoid of that acrid, Tertullian-like spirit which, in Mr Joyce, makes one uneasily con- scious that he is engaged in the moral vulgarity of disparaging the universe. M. Proust has the urbanity, the fine manners nature denied to Mr Joyce when she gave him genius; he has the vast scheme of civilizations which Miss Sinclair has not yet tried to render; he has a significance we look for in vain in Miss Richardson.

M. Proust's admiration for Ruskin is one of the typical, dis- tinctive characteristics of his mind. It is not the affected admira- tion for Ruskin's "purple periods," which Wilde professed, and it is certainly not a sympathy for Ruskin's peculiar views on art. It is an admiration directed towards Ruskin's essential apprecia- tiveness, his capacity for the assimilation and understanding of beauty, his reverence for the arts as symbols and expressions of

civilization. Often, especially in modern Paris, you will find an art looked upon as something self-supporting, as if it had an existence of its own, independent of the civilization in which it lives and by which it should be nourished and of the past from which it grew. This error, which is being cleverly though perhaps unconsciously exposed by the young Dadaistes, leads inevitably to death and is profoundly repulsive to M. Proust. We can observe it in a thousand little points of his writing. He finds it as unpleasant to repudiate a dead artist as he would the memory of a relative. Perhaps one of the most useful things proved by his books is that a mind steeped in tradition, a mind almost fastidiously respectful, has nevertheless created one of the most original novels of the time.

SAINT-LOUP: A PORTRAIT

BY MARCEL PROUST

SAINT-LOUP came up fidgeting all over, his monocle flying before him; I had not sent up my name, I was impatient to enjoy his surprise and his pleasure.

"Oh, what a bore" he cried out suddenly catching sight of me, and went red to the ears, "I've just taken my week's leave and won't be able to get out for another eight days."

And, preoccupied by the thought that I would have to be alone this first night, since he knew better than any one my agonies at night, which he had often noticed and soothed, he broke off complaining to turn in my direction, giving me little smiles, and unequal tender looks, some coming directly from his eye, others through his monocle, all alluding to his emotion at seeing me again, alluding also to that important thing which I did not always understand but which was important to me now, our friendship.

"Oh Lord, and where are you going to sleep? Really I don't advise the hotel where we are boarding, it's right next to the Exposition, the shows are going to begin and there'll be a wild crowd of people. No, you'd better go to the Hôtel de Flandre, it's an ancient little palace of the eighteenth century, with old tapestries. That 'makes' quite an 'old historic mansion.'"

Saint-Loup always used the word "make" for "seem" because the spoken language, like the written language, from time to time feels the need of such alterations in the meaning of words, of such refinements of expression. And just as journalists often do not know from what school of literature the "graces" they use are derived, so the vocabulary and even the diction of Saint-Loup were imitated from three different aesthetes, none of whom he knew but whose fashions of speech had been indirectly imposed on him. "Besides," he concluded, "this hotel is particularly good for your auditory hypersensitiveness. You will have no neighbours. I know that that's a paltry advantage and as after all another traveller may come in to-morrow, it would not be worth while to choose that hotel for such precarious results. No, it is

on account of its appearance that I recommend it to you. The rooms are very sympathetic, all the furniture is old and comfortable, and that is something reassuring." But for me, less of an artist than Saint-Loup, the pleasure a pretty house could give was superficial, almost non-existent, and could not calm my rising distress, as painful as that I felt long ago at Cambray when my mother did not come to bid me good-night, or at Balbec, the day I arrived, in the room that was too high and smelt of bent-grass. Saint-Loup understood from my stare.

"But you don't give a hang for this pretty palace, my poor child, you're quite pale; what a big brute I am to talk to you about tapestries which you haven't even the heart to look at. I know the room they'll give you very well, and personally I think it's rather gay, but I realize that for you, with your sensitiveness, it's not the same thing. You must not think that I don't understand you. I do not feel the same way, but I put myself exactly in your place."

A subaltern who was trying a horse in the courtyard, intent on making him jump, disregarding the soldiers' salutes but firing off volleys of curses at those who got in his way, just then turned and smiled on Saint-Loup and seeing that he had a friend with him, saluted. But his horse reared up to his full height, foaming. Saint-Loup flung himself at the horse's head, took him by the bridle, managed to calm him, and returned to me.

"Yes" he said to me, "I assure you I am aware of it and I suffer for what you must go through; it makes me unhappy," he added, putting his hand affectionately on my shoulder, "to think that if I had been able to stay with you, perhaps by being near you, by talking with you until daybreak, I could have relieved your distress a little. I would gladly lend you books but you couldn't read in your state. And I'll never be able to get some one to take my place here. I've just done it twice in succession because my little girl came down." He knit his brow with annoyance and because he was trying, like a doctor, to find what remedy he might prescribe for my malady.

"Run up and make a fire in my room," he said to a passing soldier. "Faster than that—get a move on."

Then, again, he turned to me, and again his monocle and his myopic gaze alluded to our great friendship.

"No, I can't believe my eyes that you are here in the barracks where I have thought of you so much. I think it is a dream. Everything considered, is your health better? You must tell me all about it presently. We'll go up to my room, we won't stay too long down here, there's a devil of a wind. I don't feel it any more but you are not used to it, I am afraid you must be cold. And about work, have you got down to it? No! What an odd one you are! If I had your inclinations I think I should be writing from morning until night. But you have a better time doing nothing. What a misfortune that mediocrities like myself are always ready to work, and those who can do not want to. And I haven't asked for news of your grandmother yet? Her Proudhon is still with me."

An officer, big, handsome, majestic, came down the stairway with slow and solemn steps. Saint-Loup saluted him and immobilized the perpetual instability of his body long enough to hold his hand on a level with his *képi*. But he had flung it up with such force, stiffening with such a crisp movement, and as soon as the salute was over let it fall with such a brusque galvanic snap, changing the positions of his shoulder, his leg, his monocle, that the moment was less one of immobility than of a vibrant tension in which the movements just produced and those about to begin neutralized each other. However the officer, without coming nearer, calm, benevolent, dignified, imperial, representing in sum everything that Saint-Loup was not, also, but without haste, lifted his hand to his *képi*.

Many enlisted men of other squadrons, young rich bourgeois who had never entered into aristocratic society and knew it only from the outside, were moved to admiration by what they knew of Saint-Loup, and this feeling was doubled by the prestige which came from seeing the young man, when they went to Paris on leave, Saturday night, often dining with the duc d'Uzès and the prince d'Orléans. And on account of that they had found something "chic" in his handsome face, his loose gait and jerky salute, the perpetual darting of his monocle, the "fantasy" of his excessively high *képi*, of his trousers, the cloth excessively fine and too red—a "chic" which they were sure was wanting in the most

elegant officers of the regiment, even the majestic captain who seemed, in comparison, too solemn and almost vulgar.

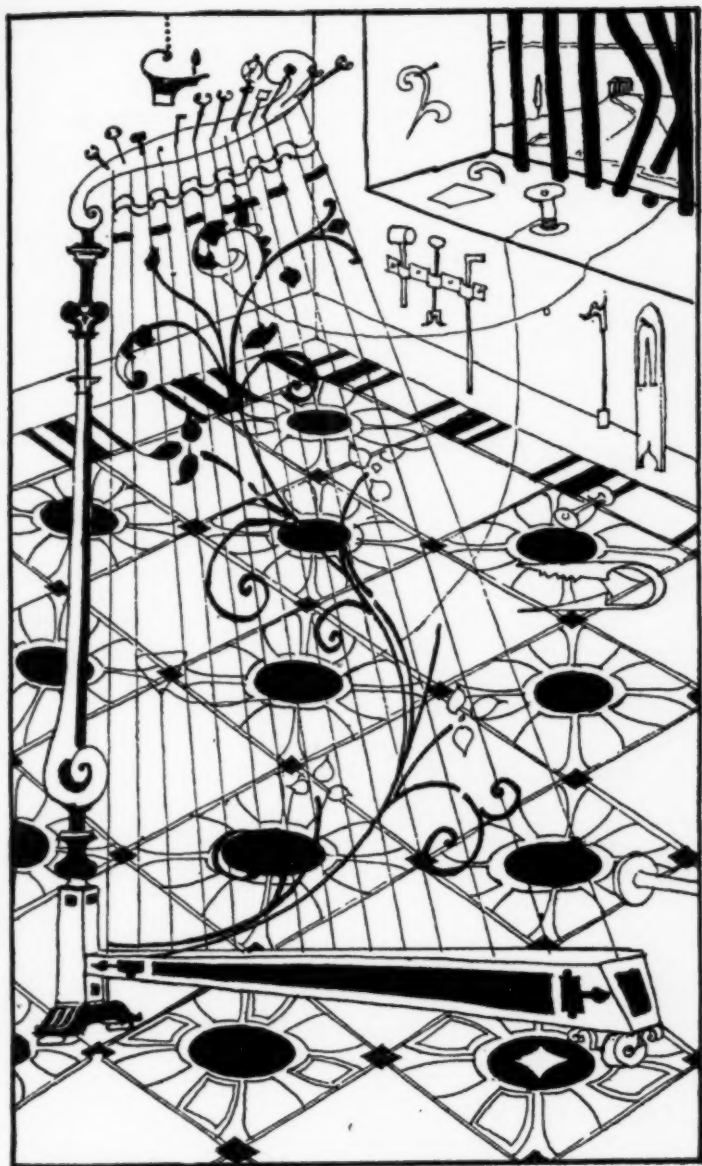
Some one said that the Captain had bought a new horse. "Let him buy all the horses he wants. I met Saint-Loup in the Allée des Acacias, and he was riding with a different 'chic,' " said another; and with justice, for these young men who belonged to another class and did not have the same set of acquaintances in society, were like the aristocracy in knowing all the elegances which can be bought for money. In all that concerned clothes, for example, theirs had a sort of excessive study, were more impeccable than the free and negligent elegance of Saint-Loup which so pleased my grandmother. It was a little sensation for these sons of great bankers or stock-brokers, when they were eating oysters after the theatre, to see the subaltern Saint-Loup at a table close to theirs. And what stories were told in the barracks on Monday when they came back from leave, by a soldier in Saint-Loup's squadron, whom he had greeted "very courteously" or by another, not in the same squadron, but who believed that in spite of that he had been recognized because Saint-Loup had levelled his monocle two or three times in his direction.

One evening I wanted to tell a rather amusing story about Mme. Blandais, but I stopped at once because I remembered that Saint-Loup already knew it and that when I had wanted to tell it to him the day after I arrived he had interrupted me with, "you told me that at Balbec." So I was surprised to see Saint-Loup urging me to continue, assuring me that he did not know the story and that it would amuse him very much. I told him, "You are forgetting for a moment, but you will soon remember it." "But no, I swear you're confusing me with some one else. You never told it to me. Go on." And all through the story he feverishly fixed his enchanted gaze now on me, now on his comrades. Only when I had finished, when every one was laughing, did I understand that he fancied he would give a fine idea of my wit to his comrades and that was why he pretended not to know the story. That is friendship.

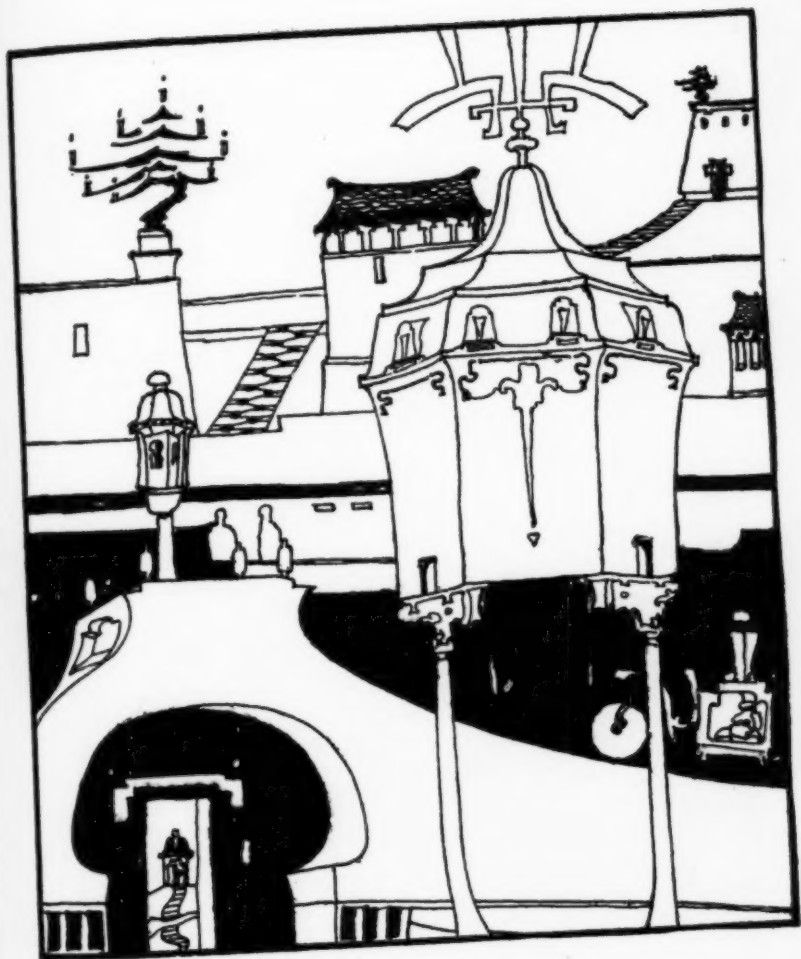
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SONNET-MAKING. BY DONALD CORLEY.



ETUDE CHINOISE. BY DONALD CORLEY.



AN ATTIC FUNERAL. BY DONALD CORLEY.

TWO POEMS

BY PADRAIC COLUM

THE SISTER'S LULLABY

You would not slumber
If laid at my breast:
You would not slumber.

My thoughts are strayed birds,
My blood is possessed:
You would not slumber.

The rain-drops encumber
The hawthorn's crest:
You would not slumber.

The river flood beats
The swan from her nest:
You would not slumber.

Times without number
Has called the woodquest:
Times without number.

As oft as she called
To me you were pressed:
Times without number.

Now you'd not slumber
If laid at my breast
Times without number.

O starling reed-resting,
I'll rock you to rest:
So you will slumber!

TWO POEMS

LEGEND

There is an hour, they say,
 On which your dream has power:
 Then all you wish for comes,
 As comes the lost field-bird
 Down to the island lights.
 There is an hour, they say,
 That's woven with your wish:
 In dawn or dayli'gone,
 In mirk-dark or at noon,
 In hush or hum of day,
 May be that secret hour.

A herd-boy in the rain,
 Who looked o'er stony fields;
 A young man in the street,
 When fife and drum went by,
 Making the sunlight shrill;
 A girl in a lane,
 When the long June twilight
 Made friendly far-off things,
 Had watch upon the hour:
 The deaths they met are in
 The song my grand-dam sings.

A CONTEMPORARY OF THE FUTURE

BY EVELYN SCOTT

STENDHAL, called the first realist, might better have been considered the first naturalist, though either epithet is over exact when applied to this figure of transition. Balzac, generalizing in motives rather than emotions, has most of the vulgarity of the romantic. His deficiencies of temperament alone save him from a grandiose fate. It was Flaubert who, with the consistency of intuition rather than logic, united the incidents of his moods so that they completed themselves in his audience—the true resolution of the creative act.

However, though he sought to translate to us, through suggestive means, the indefinable experience of emotion, an attitude of philosophical skepticism influenced and limited his art, leading him to consider emotion only as the response to an elementary stimulus. Emotion as a quality of feeling forcing itself into expression, though it frequently follows as the direct result of a sensory stimulus, is not nearly always a mere subjective elongation of what the senses register, but is complicated again and again by the conflict of mentally stored impulses. Yet the naturalistic writers treat the brain of the civilized human, with its accumulated complexities, exactly as though it were the brain of a dog or a savage.

In *Madame Bovary*, for example, there does not result in Emma's mind that accumulation of perception, dim though it may be, which would serve to heighten the tragedy of the book and fortify the author's intention. The mental and emotional experiences of Flaubert's heroine remain apart. Except that her banal ideals are indicated in a general way, she suggests nothing complex to us or to herself. In the exquisite instant of feeling we are aware of the moment, radiant, impalpable, unduplicatable as a rainbow or a cloud. It passes over her futile soul as a reflection over a lake, leaving, contrary to all records of the psychology of even moderately self-aware beings, not even the intellectual residue of itself stored up in her soul to complicate the future with its thinly distilled direction.

Naturalism is sometimes described as the logical obverse of romanticism, but there is a difference. The romantic ideal of beauty and moral perfection was incorporate in romantic art as a soul in a body. Naturalism, on the other hand, took no ultimate shape, and was no more than a theory of limitations. As such it restrained rather than moulded individual expression, developing inhibitions which resulted in a kind of aborted realism.

To Flaubert, as to our modern George Moore, all moments are as one. They reflect their sense impressions with oriental lucidity and quiescence. No psychological interactions are possible in this atmosphere of timelessness. And as there is little conscious response to life in their work, there is little tragedy. Moore writes like a man in a trance. His voluptuous sentences carry us forward indefinitely, and their rhythm is the rhythm of waves in a tideless sea. No confused impulses strike like contrary rays of light on this huge surface. Pathos with its quality of obliviousness gives the character to Moore's writing. In Evelyn Innes, for example, there is no real struggle between the religious and the secular impulse. Emotional nuances, shed like dim rays from a hidden sun, tint the receptive yet negative personality of the heroine, and we acknowledge her the medium for this or that feeling, but it is the emotion living through her and not by her that we apprehend, and, when the emotion passes, the loss we sense is rather our loss than hers.

As the character of feeling displayed by Emma Bovary and Evelyn Innes is that of minds controlled in their operations by no experience of the past or anticipation of the future, it is the type of feeling which psychology has associated with the mentality of the child; and when James Joyce, in his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, gives us the early life of Stephen Dedalus in a similar vein we find exquisite appropriateness in the method so used. It is a mind which has not yet developed complexities that responds so simply yet so delicately to the obvious aspects of its surroundings.

Here is the whole pathos of the child's life. Strange yet familiar objects are grouped about the little boy and their newly acquired nomenclature suggests to him relations as yet clouded with the emotional obscurity of the first contact. The relative depth of the emotional values which illuminate Stephen's environment are

proven, I should think, in the memory of almost any one's childhood. Thus Irish politics are nebulously conceived and only crystallize in Mrs Riordon's green and maroon backed brushes. The association of phrases from *The Litany of the Blessed Virgin* with the little girl of the cool hands have just that naïve and remote harmony with their inspiration which is born of feeling rather than thought. The little boy is as much a poet as the author of *The Song of Solomon*, and in the same manner. To heighten the heart-rending effect of Stephen's simplicity, we are given bits of childish humour often permeated with a grotesque and subconscious sensuality. When Jesus told his followers to become as little children he established in the minds of the narrower ascetics who came after him the convention of innocence as a kind of bomb-proof indestructible blankness of the senses. This misinterpretation, responsible for most of the tragedies of childhood and adolescence, has captured even the vision of art and made it, in this direction, quite generally myopic.

Occasionally some determinedly courageous writer like Miss May Sinclair, who, in her recent study of Mary Olivier, has shown us the evolution of an individuality from childhood to maturity, attempts to assert the irresponsibility of her senses as against what I should call, were I in ignorance of Miss Sinclair's liberal philosophy, her Presbyterian conviction of sin. In perusing Mary Olivier, however, we are never free from an impression that the author is doing her duty by the flesh. She is a conscientious spinster in the confessional and we blush with her, not that her sins are many, but that they are few. Miss Sinclair, it would seem, has an incurably virginal outlook and we dislike being forced to this mistaken emphasis of the weaker incidents of a personality which, on its intellectual side, so entirely commands our respect.

The consciousness of virtue exists to assert a consciousness of sin in the soul which requires a witness for its acts. As an artist Mr Joyce, unlike Miss Sinclair, is able to dispense with the moral audience—even with the self that sits in judgement before it can give absolution.

Stephen's home, family, and early associates pass from us instantly in a procession of fate. Poverty, a meaningless word to the child, becomes concrete in the repeated sight of moving vans, the thumbled and grease-marked pawn tickets, and the meagre disarray

of ill-assorted china on a clothless board. It is effectively hinted to the reader by such trivial things as the wondering remark of an elderly aunt and the admiration of the small cousin who looks at the picture of the variety artist as at a lovely being of another life.

It is because Stephen has not catalogued these people that they live for us in his imagination. From his contact with Mr and Mrs Dedalus, Mrs Riordon, Uncle Charles, and Eileen is sprung the first spark of self-awareness. That part of our environment which lives is the part which makes emotional demands on us. When the figures of childhood fade from Stephen's emotional vision, they cease to exist, and the vitality of the father and mother and the priests and boys at Clongowes is transmuted into the vitality of the whore in the mean street.

One's childhood impressions have the significance of an occasion, but it is the impersonal nature of the first stirrings of sex which make the whole world live in the adolescent's spirit. Overpowered by the magnitude of this counter-self, the youth grasps at the defence of an ideal with which to hold his own turgid soul at bay. Clutching the easiest acceptable generality, he describes himself in its terms. So the power of the word gradually eliminates from his consciousness those inconvenient propensities which do not coincide with his definition.

The period of growing pains is the time in which the emotional capacities of the individual have reached their full and have not yet been brought under control of this sub-conscious hypnosis. In the case of the average man with an easy facility for self-deception, lingering uncataloguable traits are, in some manner only to be explained by the subtleties of sophist reasoning, soon made to appear a confirmation of his conception of a simplified self. If the machinery of a theory be logical, only the exceptional person will trouble about the premise on which it is built, and even this extraordinary being, without an ideal of himself would be forced to face a world of unrelated values, a reality of pure emotion, in fact, and so a kind of madness.

Art preserves itself through its conventions, but these conventions justify themselves only when the artist makes use of them paradoxically, so that they are a kind of negation of all they represent. To achieve a practical purpose one defines one's self positively. For the purposes of art there are only negative definitions. So in

the manner of his denial, through the order of a sophisticated technique, he may assert that magnificent disorder that preceeds our small perfections.

When Stephen Dedalus casts off the thralldom of the religion which has dominated his childhood, he becomes a man, and probably a great man—certainly an artist—by asserting himself in this negative sense. In the freedom of denial which never belongs fully to any one but the artist, he is able to feel the life about him with exquisite and intimate detachment. For ever apart from him, the clouds, the sea, the young girl with the long white legs like a stork's, are intimate, perfect, and indivisible incidents of his being.

If only Mr Joyce had possessed the artistic courage to end his book with these most intense paragraphs of emotional realization, and had not diffused the effects of a priceless moment in some one hundred pages of brilliant but disintegrating comment! The aesthetic formulas which originate in Stephen's maturing mind articulate so small a part of the reality which is Stephen, a reality which we have not touched curiously from the outside but have entered into.

However, as extraneous as is Mr Joyce's exposition of art to the very effective impressionism of the creation which goes before, he gives us, on the lips of the maturing adolescent, more than one hint, from the critic standpoint, of a tendency which later fulfils itself in *Ulysses*, the first imaginative attempt at a complete history of consciousness.

Mr Joyce might be described as the only artist who has seen himself through. Even in his volume of poems, *Chamber Music*—made up of plaintive little Elizabethan numbers of irrelevant perfection—there is discernible that balance between sense and consideration which should characterize the seeker for reality. One imagines it impossible for Mr Joyce to intoxicate himself with the approximate expression; and the clarity of his vision, always so precise, is at the same time quietly and endlessly intense, like a continuous pain.

Mr Joyce is still a young writer, but even in *Dubliners*, one of his first published volumes, there is in his style an extreme lucidity and composure which give one the impression of fulfilment rather than promise. In this book he broke no new ground, but at least

he showed us that the absence of spiritual nuance in most of the prose written in the English tongue was not due to any lack in the potentialities of the language, but was rather the result of a crassness of mentality in the people who used it.

To-day, when this author's technique has developed unique aspects that threaten to indicate a revolution of style for the future, the spirit of his work suggests the culmination of a long and slowly evolving line rather than the ebullition of a fresh impulse. Most of the Dubliners are presented to us statically through a quality of mind comparable only to the poetic quality in emotions. That is to say these are true sketches which escape the suggestion of direction; though occasionally one moves toward an irrevocable climax in the manner of the short story formula.

No man is wholly himself who is wholly aware of himself, and it is only through the delicacy of his method that the most exquisite ironist escapes a taint of complaisance. Mr Joyce, who in this single instance resembles Chekhov, is sometimes ironical, and on these occasions is, one might say, almost imperceptibly obvious. Some of the studies seem a bit opaque, like faithful transparencies which require the gilding of sense to throw them into relief. There is more than one hint of that submerged drama in which half of the human race is still-born—the drama of the incomplete act. The man without imagination is able to act entirely; but our past asserts itself through our refinements and chains us in a sterility of the emotions.

Mr Joyce's mentality is as complex as that of the Russian realist and expresses itself in paradox, so that one suggestion modifies another and subtly evades that polarity in idea in which the simple or romantic emotions have a tendency to concentrate. It is the intelligence which forces us to live alone, however, and the Irish writer's moods, even when most of the earth, are cloistral, so that he echoes himself as from an infinite distance.

In a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man the material is broad and simple and the author's triumph, as in Dubliners, is in his superior application of a method already half established by precedent. When Mr Joyce set out to write a play, on the contrary, he initially distinguished his effort by his daring selection of a theme which is exquisitely complex. And in presenting his situation he dares to express himself through the medium of a *vis-à-vis* who is

on a perfect equality—emotional and intellectual—with his creator. Very few dramatists can resist the advantage which comes through an intellectual simplification of their creatures, for the emotional reactions of a complex mentality are elusive almost beyond dramatization. For the sake of an emphasis which expressed his philosophy of life, Ibsen again and again embodied his dramatic conceptions in small-minded individuals.

Before reading *Exiles*, Mr Joyce's work, I looked upon Strindberg as the single instance in contemporary and nearly-contemporary drama, of the artist able to include the finest counter-currents of reaction in the general forward motion of the drama, without halting or impeding the culmination of this movement. Strindberg's effects were achieved through the instinct which made him cling to his very limitations—so to hold himself together against the dispersion of his personality in the temperamental winds of madness. Not once was he able to see through to the clear side of self-realization, nor were his characters.

When Mr Joyce drew Richard Rowan, however, he gave us a character highly self-perceptive and ruthlessly so, one whose experience of life is complete, each instant born of the senses dying a beautiful and perfect death in the mind. So clearly does Richard Rowan appreciate the value of moments detached from each other, as they must be in realization, that he is no longer capable of what might be termed the lie of action. Action is a simple and entire expression of the individual, and becomes possible only through a temporary obliviousness to complex values. The tendency of a high state of perception is to arrest the motive force which is behind the will.

Action is self-assertion. It gathers into one the forces of unresolved impressions, which then contribute to proclaim the actor. If a man be receptive, and take into himself a thousand moments which he can not express, he gradually becomes a disassociated personality. Overpowered by opportunities for selecting his assertion, he remains in such slavery to truth that he has not the heart to proclaim one reality over another.

When the Bible states that it is more blessed to give than to receive, the prophet might well be poetically announcing the superiority of the actor over the acted upon. But art has an advantage which is beyond philosophical professions, and even religions

bound to the definitions of their creeds: it permits one to assert an infinite number of truths without forcing them into logical relationship.

Richard Rowan's is essentially the type of mind which must flee to art to save itself; and when we are told that he is an author, we are given another example of the accuracy of Mr. Joyce's instinct. Just as it seems most plausible that Richard should wield his pen according to his fancy, it is also in the nature of men that Robert Hand, his friend for many years, should have taken to the readier profession of journalism. Robert's inclinations are practical. Action for him is easy and spontaneous. Feeling no prudent obligation to truth, he ends, through all his trickery toward others, in being, of Joyce's group, most true to himself. Mr Joyce juxtaposes Robert Hand and Richard Rowan as the lie which creates and the truth which destroys. Richard's inhibitions first proclaim themselves in his aversion to moral responsibility, the subjective equivalent of action.

Nine years before the play begins Bertha has made an independent decision to cast her lot with Richard. He neither accepts nor refuses her gift of self; but after this time together, with the burden of the child she has borne him, he finds himself irked and intangibly bound to her and, through her unsolicited abandon, made responsible in spite of himself. The object of sacrifice is always a victim, and this is a drama on the motive of self-sacrifice modified by subtleties of sex feeling. Where Ibsen describes the accidental motive that incites to sacrifice and the irony of its particular result, Joyce shows us what sacrifice is as a gesture of mind before it is translated in the conventions of religious or sexual vanity—the ego's attempt to elude restraint. As such it is the response to a deep but unconsidered psychological need.

Richard, to deny the bond imposed on his will and binding him to Bertha, carnally betrays her again and again, each time, by refusing to lie to her, denying his obligation to preserve their relationship. He gives her the frankest knowledge of what she has suffered through him, and so forces upon her the repeated resolution of their common attitude. Richard has not realized that on the moral plane passivity is as positive as action, and that in this sense there is no such thing as a negative decision.

Again Bertha entraps him by refusing to resent her burdens.

The desire for irresponsibility can be entirely gratified only when one is acted upon in a manner against which volition has no defence. Richard encourages Bertha to accept the amorous attentions of Robert. If she accept Robert for her lover, then by her act against Richard she admits his freedom, having injected into their relationship an element over which he has not even potential control. Bertha, in her love affair, clutches the Christian's advantage. She will accept Robert if Richard wills it. Even in this triangular situation she will remain quiescent.

Again we have Richard on the defensive, obliged to initiate. At a crucial point he revolts and his nihilism is so complete that Bertha, without the courage to follow him, finds herself again bearing the burden which he has eschewed. She is bound by necessities inherent in her sex, while Richard, more superfluous in Nature's device, has liberated himself.

Further detaching himself from the circumstances he has evolved, Richard gives to Robert, also, freedom to decide his future with Bertha. Thus the parties to the contemplated liason are stripped even of the comfort of a sense of wrongdoing. Sin, inferring an assertion of some authority over the sinner, is the confirmation of the individual's dependence—and dependence is a relatively irresponsible condition. Richard leaves Robert and Bertha as free as the gods, and so reduces them, for the time being, to his own state of inanition.

With a fatalistic conviction of wrongdoing strong in her soul, Bertha might be imagined as yielding herself abandonedly to Robert's caresses; but shame has been taken away from her. Shame is an emotional resolution. Richard forces Bertha to intellectualize her surrender and so destroys its counterpart in her emotions. Her relation to Robert has, after all, never been more than an attempt to evaluate through another the quality of her devotion to Richard. Indeed, she and Richard have both used Robert to work out the theory of another love.

Richard, when he invited Bertha to betray him, flayed her vanity and forced her to recklessness. In the last act we see her so pained by the consciousness that he has destroyed her moral superiority, that, for the moment, she regards him with a defensive hatred. He, too, in his heart is resenting her docility, for she has yielded to his suggestion that she betray him. His self-love has invented a

torture to prove itself through her, and she has failed. The recriminations and counter-recriminations of the two confirm the hopeless authenticity of all special pleading.

The woman's conserving instinct stirs in her an aversion to this fatal dalliance with truth, and she demands of man the lie that will make her whole. To him she looks to justify, by an exaggerated gratitude for what she is, her necessity to live even in the depths of her humiliation. This is what Richard refuses.

Bertha's profound doubt of herself impels her to heighten the obstacles between her and Richard in proportion as she aches to see them demolished. If he overthrows them, he will establish a faith which has the dimensions of her disbelief. Her tragedy becomes sordidly simple when she sees that Richard's yearning for escape is half the cloak of a perplexed desire for a woman as yet uncontaminated by his moral uncertainty—a woman whose virgin will shall force him to a contradiction of himself.

Of incidental defects, this play has a few. The character of Beatrice Justice is utterly without insistence. It is the projection of a passive personality which endures dramatization, but offers no interchange of life to the characters which surround it. The child, too, by very obvious, unindividual tricks of thought and speech, is recognizable as a member of the genus child. There are other things, more or less inconsequential, like Bertha's intimate postures with her son—trivial acts often repeated—which, with their permanent aspect and their ephemeral significance, leave a catch in the throat.

One after another Ibsen's characters, to continue our previous comparison, die or are resurrected to witness a lie of living—a lie toward themselves, made manifest in the falseness of an external relationship. Only in *The Wild Duck* is fidelity to truth given as the proof of failure. Yet *The Wild Duck* is illustrative only allegorically. In creating Richard Rowan, Joyce goes a step further and identifies the doubter with his doubt, in a literal psychological sense. The principal character of *Exiles* reveals to us that, not by his action but by his being, the truth-seeker destroys himself and those whom he would impregnate with his vanity.

Truth is a never-finished revelation. To be always aware of this unending thing, one must preserve a continuous detachment

toward one's experience of self. There is the shadow or expression of what one is from moment to moment, and there is one's consciousness of the shadow. The consciousness is the ego. As long as the shadow falls, rejected, before or behind, one may perceive it; but at midday the shadow disappears, and one only feels the light, seeing no longer. The light of midday is the moment of acceptance—the highest moment of being—and all of the elucidation that follows is a lie, since it pretends to reflect an identical image of that vanished instant.

Richard Rowan perceived understanding to be an approximation of the thing understood. In his vanity he preferred to hold himself always apart from the realization that extinguishes the egoistic sense, and his gaze remained fixed on the shadow which assured him that he existed.

Mr Joyce approaches psychology, not as a study of the means through which life comes to us, but as a revelation of life itself, all inhering in the quality of mind. Our socially cultivated imagination revolts from the spectacle of human beings sacrificed to truth, and our sympathies often incline toward Bertha and Robert as the crasser attitude of these two provides Richard with the luxury of absolute integrity of feeling. If Richard had killed himself, we could have forgiven him in the sensation of release, for tragedy provides us with an expulsive channel for the emotions. But Mr Joyce writes a tragi-comedy and allows a tension to accumulate which he does not resolve. His last page leaves us as baffled as the characters themselves, weary even in understanding. In doing so he ignores orthodox requirements of audiences of the drama, but he completes consummately an extraordinary study.

At present his latest work, *Ulysses*, is available only in the first instalments of the serial form in which it has been brought out simultaneously by *The Little Review* in this country, and in England by the *London Egoist*. Just now one may consider no more than the effectiveness of its detail, for the scope of the whole can as yet be no more than a matter of conjecture.

Ulysses is a slice of life in a new sense, a cross section of the mind in action. This action might be diagrammatically represented as wave-like, a fluid motion toward articulation which only momentarily achieves itself. The quality of minds intensely heated by feeling is thinly flowing, constantly mounting toward

the crest of climax. If the emotional mind be intellectually subtle, it may preserve itself in immanence over long periods, and the final burst of escape in expression be shatteringly explosive. Mr Joyce's very wonderful technical feat in this book is the manner in which he is able to indicate to us the quality and tempo of many distinct streams of consciousness, while preserving the comparative immediacy of his effect.

Of authors who would inundate us in the current of a single being, there have been a few, and among these Miss Dorothy Richardson offers, in her method, the most consummate example. In *Interim*, which is representative of her usual style of approaching a subject, she holds us as if head downward in the ambiguous jelly of Miriam's mind, which flows over us almost as imperceptibly as a glacier, never reaching a point at which it might crystalize in permanent self-recognition.

The quality of an individual is best recognized by the type of idea in which his emotions culminate. In the purely sensuous soul the undulation of being is voluptuously monotonous, and only dim perceptions light the ebb and flow. But persons, who exist entirely on the plane of sensation are infants or senile people, abortive or defective. There are indications that Miss Richardson's heroine is a rounded human and we resent somewhat being forced to regard her existence as if passed for ever under water. She is not once allowed to come up for air. Miss Richardson has admirably achieved the intimate impression; but she wilfully curtails the intellectual processes of her creatures in order to preserve indefinitely for her readers the moment of emotional intensification which precedes realization.

To behold life for ever as if from the depths of the sea becomes fatiguing. Here the shapes about us are distorted in the swell of waters which bear us onward, waters which we can not see, waters that roar in our ears. And whether we are submerged in the consciousness of one heroine or another we come finally to the moment when we desire escape toward oxygen. Miss Richardson has a colour register of the emotions which she may call by a hundred different names, but it remains always recognizable through its limitations.

Mr Joyce, in *Ulysses*, preserves all the advantage which inheres in subjective immersion without suffocating us in the closeness of

prolonged immediacy. The succession of rapidly dissolving climaxes which occur in the minds of Stephen and Mr Bloom affect us in a very direct manner, while we are at the same time permitted to preserve an exterior and critical consciousness of life. Stephen's subtle psychology allows him an attenuated awareness of self even when his senses are at white heat. Mr Bloom's mind suggests a fluid that is colder and thicker. It congeals readily in recognition of the concrete, and his massive senses are fired to slow intensity only by a fleshly contact. His mental processes are quick and simple, and he preserves, in his outlook on life, a kind of chastity of common sense.

In Stephen's finely strung being there is a continual turmoil, and a swell of confusion which carries the residue from one incomplete crisis to lift the crest of another, where he reaches the peak of an almost insupportably clear vision. For the most part hyper-responsiveness has frayed his sensations thin, so that the jargon of his unleashed thought rarely articulates sensation.

Yet this thinness of sense is only the fatigue of a too precious pain, as we feel through the poignant scene in Episode X, where he encounters his sister surreptitiously fondling the coverless French primer which she has purchased at a second hand booth. Through the mist of his brooding reflections Stephen echoes her poverty-stricken ambition, the counterpart of his aesthetic hunger. In her shamed eyes he reads their common conviction of a hopeless future.

Old Simon Dedalus swaggers again through this book, as crassly alive as he was in the first pages of the Portrait, a man with a happy obliviousness to subtleties which permits him successfully to assert himself over his spiritual betters. He is the type of male who has fostered in women their defensive deviousness—a handsome and benevolent skunk, ingratiatingly proud of its stink.

Through the haze of Stephen's mental suffering we see, looming large and menacing, as shapes in a field on a grey day, the sordid outlines of the Dedalus environment; and a few reflective phrases revive for us the horrid commonplace of Mrs Dedalus's death. Many minor characters in the pages of *Ulysses* appeared first in *Dubliners*, and in their reincarnation their lineaments are once more distinct. Mr Joyce's parsimony of method is in a sense the mark of his lavishness, for he uses the stuff of the whole world to prove one man.

In *Ulysses* there is the touch of a Rabelaisian humour, felt occasionally in the *Portrait*, but entirely missing from *Exiles* and *Dubliners*. It furnishes a base in permanent and simple requirements for the super-structure of refined perceptions; and contradicts the tendency of the sophisticated mind toward a sterile disassociation from essentials. In the literature of an average intelligence is the tradition of a humour which would be flavourless without the conventions, the humour of man's astonishment when Nature intrudes.

Mr Joyce's humour anticipates the conventions. It is the humour of dirt, of Nature herself as she regards man in his fastidiousness. This is the humour of the god and of the child. It does not discriminate in a secondary sense, and is not surprised by a disarrangement of particular conventions, but by the phenomena of convention as a single incongruity. This is expressed in the freshness of Bloom's curiosity as he examines his sensations, and, with an added sharpness, it is in Buck Mulligan's contemplation of himself and his friend. I do not know of any contemporary prose writer of specious gusto whose work shows a hardihood which could sustain it. Certainly the red-blooded *littérateurs* of America would faint with the odour of Mr Joyce's sanity.

After the first several episodes, *Ulysses* changes *tempo* and takes on a quality of intricacy which can be neither condemned nor justified until we are presented with the volume entire and are able to gauge the scope of its pretensions. In representing mass-consciousness by cross current impressions of individuals reacting almost simultaneously to a common stimulus, Mr Joyce sometimes arrives at a doubtful effect; but putting aside an end, which at this writing is still beyond us, there remain the means through which the Irish artist is recreating a portion of the English language.

By a compounding of nouns with adjectives and even of adjectives with adverbs—"Eglintoneyes, looked up shybrightly," and so forth—he conveys to us a simultaneous rather than a cumulative impression which has these components. The established conventions of the English tongue have hitherto permitted us to represent only in artificial sequence the composition of a single moment. Mr Joyce is developing a theory of harmonics in language, somewhat equivalent to the harmonics of musical form. By his agglutinative method of printing words we become aware, as in an actual

occurrence in which the senses coöperate, of many qualities at once as if they were one, and the result is a reaction that is simple yet full of nuance.

In attributing quotations he also places the adverb of modification before rather than after the name of the person speaking, which is, except in the shock of meeting on a street corner, the true order of recognition. Again convention falsely lays the emphasis of our attention on a recognition of the speaker's identity.

There is no great courage that does not reflect a porportionate fear. The dauntless self-recognition of the great artist is the despairing protest of his egotism. Against the blankness of emotion with which one must regard annihilation, are thrown into relief the sharp details of existence. If James Joyce were not clear-thinking and deliberate in his pessimism, he could not register so exquisitely the delicate ramifications of living.

It is the defect of many a compelling and responsive personality that it intoxicates itself with life until it cannot longer make accurately the great distinction between this world and the next. This is the psychology of the martyr's triumph. James Joyce escapes the intoxication of self through the marvelous fineness of his psychological balance.

The human race accepts slowly its subconscious convictions, which then rise almost imperceptibly to the lips of its great artists and become articulate in their work. James Joyce, to my mind, expresses, more clearly than any other writer of English prose in this time, the conviction of modernity—a new and complex knowledge of self which has passed its period of racial gestation and is ready for birth in art.

DUST FOR SPARROWS

BY REMY DE GOURMONT

Translated by Ezra Pound

26

The need which intelligent men have for hearing good music is only a pretext for lifting themselves above prosaic reality into the world of agreeable sensations, of beautiful ideas and chimeras.

27 *

There are memories like old mirrors with part of their quick-silver gone. Recollections take, in them, an admirable clarity, but they are full of wholly empty lacunae.

28

Man is no longer the centre of creation. Yet subjectively he has not yet abandoned that centrality, seeing that the universe still exists solely for him, in so far as he is the sole being who transforms sensation into consciousness.

29 *

But for the nervous system we might consider all our body as an exterior world.

30

Since perfect psychic health is as impossible as absolute physical health our best course is to seek out the defects of our intelligence, and if incurable, to circumscribe or neutralize them by will or by any appropriate moral system.

31

The source of what good there is in confession may come from the fact that many mental defects, being sins, are curable by the shame of avowal and the punishment of the penance.

32

Certain monomanias are presumably, in the mental mechanism, about what hernias are in the intestines; they do not disturb the general functioning, but they are an annoyance and may cause serious accidents.

33

At times, and even very often, we are set upon by unthought about memories of days, of particular places; memories to which we attach no significance. By what association of ideas are these reminiscences brought us? We can not make out, for what is produced is an association of sensations. A grey cold bit of weather without wind, or some other bit equally characteristic brings us the recollection of an analogous day which had given us a special impression. What happens for times happens also for places, and for all impressions which travel in pairs.

34

In ageing, at the memory of the innumerable days when we have been caught by the sight of trees naked with autumn, or spring bourgeoning, it seems that we are millenarians. Each revolution of the earth is, as the ancients thought it, a poem complete: each day of spring or winter which remains out in the memory is recalled as a season, as a year.

35

Images are not decisive arguments, but, as engravings for a complicated text, they may well serve as a prop or as a guide to intelligence.

36 and 37

The superstitions of incurable gamblers clearly indicate the mental defect from which they suffer, for, utterly incredulous, they attribute providential virtues to hazard, and prove that phobias and tics are very closely akin. Among their prejudices there is however one which is, at bottom, justifiable, and there does seem to be some truth in the idea of the run of luck (*veine*), of the favourable moment: chance, which rules the world according

to mysterious laws, has caprices. If we throw a thousand black and a thousand white balls into a glass globe and whirl it around vigorously, we see that the colours do not arrange themselves in symmetry, but form, on the contrary, groups of each colour on an asymmetrical background. In life as in the game of chance, things do not arbitrarily follow each other; but neither, on the other hand, do they show the logic of an architecture.

38

The wisdom of antiquity tries to inform us that there is no great intelligence without its grain of folly. There would probably be more exactitude in saying that for an intelligence to give its full measure it needs the spur-point of some taint from which it must deliver and redeem itself.

39

A solid and well-balanced intelligence in a healthy body will always be content with doing no more than is necessary to preserve its happy vegetative condition.

40

In great characters the explosive interior force proceeds not from a natural equilibrium, but on the contrary, from an active energy which keeps continual watch lest it escape save at the opportune moment and in the required degree.

41

The best psychological method for a writer who wants veridically to describe the deeds and actions of criminals or to linger over any other point contrary to morality, is to feign having dreamed the matter. In this way one may, temporarily and without fear of law, lay hold on the conduct, and reconstruct the sensibility of a bandit.

42

It is annoying, but true, that nearly all the superior men who are pleasing by their own fireside, are so not because one likes them, but because one admires them, flatters them, and accepts their dictatorship.

43

At times we are set upon by a profound and unjustifiable sense of shame. This ought to be because of some evil action, or some crime we have dreamt we committed.

44

We have two affective sensibilities: one of the first go, apropos of prosaic and quotidien things; and the other deeper, almost invariable. Old men shrug their shoulders at love and recall their youthful extravagances with contempt only. Yet when they reflect, they are not only capable of sighing at the memory of an unhappy passion, but one sees them weep in reading, or in seeing on the stage, some tender story, as for example Romeo and Juliet.

45

There is, it is unfortunate, no deeper abyss than that which separates abstract will from reality.

46

If mute curses cause death, those who desire the death of an husband are the least rare among criminals. [Lack of gender in English makes it impossible to render exactly the ambiguity of: *Si les malédictions muettes donnaient la mort, ceux qui souhaitent la mort d'un époux seraient les moins rare des criminels.* One might, however, extend the generality by using the obsolete term spouse. E. P.]

47

Abnegation can not exist without naïveté: exaggeratedly modest opinion of oneself and exaggeratedly favourable opinion of those whom one admires.

48

Who, miser or poor man, is most wretched? Doubtless the miser, for the poor man knows that his unhappiness is not in himself; he retains the hope of riches; while the miser knows that he will never be cured of his mania, which should make him hateful even to himself.

To be continued

FIVE AFGHAN LOVE SONGS

TRANSLATED BY E. POWYS MATHERS

I

Come to me to-day wearing your green collar,
Make your two orange sleeves float in the air, and come to me.
Touch your hair with essence and colour your clothes yellow;
The deer of reason has fled from the hill of my heart;
Come to me.

The deer of reason has fled from the hill of my heart
Because I have seen your gold rings and your amber rings;
Your eyes have lighted a small fire below my heart,
Put on your gold rings and your amber rings, and come to me.

Put on your gold rings and your amber rings, and you will be more
beautiful
Than the brown girls of poets and the milk-white wives of kings.
The coil of your hair is like a hangman's rope;
But press me to your green collar between your orange sleeves.

Press me to your green collar between your orange sleeves,
And give yourself once to 'Ajam. Slip away weeping,
Come to me to-day wearing your green collar,
Make your two orange sleeves float in the air and come to me.

'AJAM THE WASHERMAN

II

My heart is torn by the tyranny of women very quietly;
Day and night my tears are wearing away my cheeks very quietly.

Life is a red thing like the sun setting very quietly;
Setting quickly and heavily and very quietly.

If you are to buy heaven by a good deed, to-day the market is open;
To-morrow is a day when no man buys,
And the caravan is broken up very quietly.

The kings are laughing and the slaves are laughing; but for your
sake

Sayyid Ahmad is walking and mourning very quietly.

SAYYID AHMAD

III

Come, my beloved! And I say again: Come, my beloved!
The doves are moaning and calling and will not cease.
Come, my beloved!

"The fairies have made me queen, and my heart is love.
Sweeter than the green cane is my red mouth."
Come, my beloved!

The jacinth has spilled odour on your hair,
The balance of your neck is like a jacinth;
You have set a star of green between your brows.
Come, my beloved!

Like lemon trees among the rocks of grey hills
Are the soft colours of the airy veil
To your rose knee from your curved almond waist.
Come, my beloved!

Your light breast veil is tawny brown with stags,
Stags with eyes of emerald, hunted by red kings.
Come, my beloved!

Muhammad Din is wandering; he is drunken and mad;
For a year he has been dying. Send for the doctor!
Come, my beloved!

MUHAMMAD DIN TILAI

IV

A twist of fresh flowers on your dark hair,
And your hair is a panther's shadow.
On your white cheeks the down of a thousand roses,
They speak about your beauty in Lahore.
You have your mother's lips;
Your ring is frosted with rubies,
And your hair is a panther's shadow.

Your ring is frosted with rubies;
I was unhappy and you looked over the wall.
I saw your face among the crimson lilies:
There is no armour that a lover can buy,
And your hair is a panther's shadow.

"The cool fingers of the mistress burn her lovers
And they go away.
I have fatigued the wise of many lands,
And my hair is a tangle of serpents.
What is the profit of these shawls without you?
And my hair is a panther's shadow."

"A squadron of my father's men are about me,
And I have woven a collar of yellow flowers.
My eyes are veiled because I drink cups of bhang,
Being a daughter of the daughter of queens.
You can not touch me because of my palaces,
And my hair is a panther's shadow."

I will touch you though your beauty be as fair as song;
For I am a disciple of Abdel Qadir Gilani
And my songs are as beautiful as women and as strong as love;
And your hair is a panther's shadow.

Your ring is frosted with rubies . . .
Muhammad Din awaits the parting of your scarves;
Tilai is standing here, young and magnificent like a tree;
And your hair is a panther's shadow.

MUHAMMAD DIN TILAI

V

I have seen a small proud face brimming with sunlight;
I have seen the daughter of the king of Qulzum passing from
grace to grace.

Yesterday she threw her bed on the floor of her double house
And laughed with a thousand graces.

She has a little pearl and coral cap
And rides in a palanquin with servants about her
And claps her hands, being too proud to call.
I have seen a small proud face brimming with sunlight.

"My palanquin is truly green and blue;
I fill the world with pomp before me,
And am not as young a girl as you pretend.
I am of Iran, of a powerful house, I am pure steel.
I hear that I am spoken of in Lahore."
I have seen a small proud face brimming with sunlight.

I also hear that they speak of you in Lahore,
You walk with a joyous step,
Your nails are red and the palms of your hand are rosy.
A pear tree with a fresh stem is in your palace gardens,
I would not that your mother should give my pear tree
To twine with an evil spice tree or fool banana.
I have seen a small proud face brimming with sunlight.

"The coins that my father gave me for my forehead
Throw rays and light the hearts of far men;
The ray of light from my red ring is sharper than a diamond.
I go about and about in pride as of hemp wine
And my words are chosen.
But I give you my honey cheeks, dear, I trust them to you."
The words of my mouth are coloured and shining things;
I have seen a small proud face brimming with sunlight.

And two great saints are my perpetual guards.
There is never a song of Nur Uddin but has in it great achievement
And is as brilliant as a young hyacinth;

I pour a ray of honey on my disciples,
There is as it were a fire in my ballades.
I have seen a small proud face brimming with sunlight.

NUR UDDIN

BELPHEGOR

Essay on the Aesthetic of Contemporary French Society

BY JULIEN BENDA

SPECIAL CASE IN WHICH ART DEALS WITH THE
HUMAN SOUL:
DESIRE THAT ART DEAL WITH NO OTHER SUBJECT

BUT their will to get pleasure from art becomes most violent when art takes the human soul for its subject.

And first of all, it appears according to them, that art should no longer treat any other subject. Of course, there never was a time when good society gave first place to works which did not have to do with this passionate material: the poem of Lucretius attracted practically no attention among its author's contemporaries, and neither the *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Mondes* nor the *Principes de la Physique* de Newton was so well received as *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Nevertheless these writings of Fontenelle and Voltaire were keenly appreciated in their time, not only in the way certain "vulgarizations" (Fabre's work on the insects, for example) are relished as mere expositions of fact, but as *literary* productions. As for the *Epoques de la Nature*, they excited a real enthusiasm. Where, to-day, is the good company that would lose its head over such works? Who would regard as "literary" writings not dealing with the human soul (always excepting those which deal with it in the guise of "life of the bees" or "intelligence of the flower")? This is true to such an extent that every modern aesthetic precept *applies exclusively to art which deals with the human soul* ("the artist must place himself inside the subject he treats," he must espouse its "life principle," and so on), and this, though unformulated, is perfectly understood, so far are our contemporaries from imagining that art might occupy itself with another matter.

[NOTE: The only material out of which we feel capable of making something is that material ever new and palpitating: man, man,

and again man. At a time like this when one risks not being recognized at all without some badge on one's hat, shall we not choose a slogan? It will be Life first of all, life, long and patient, active, laborious, hard, life drunk with being human.—*Les Jeunes Gens d'Aujourd'hui: la jeunesse littéraire*; letter of M. Jacques Copeau.]

However, the *Entretiens* of Fontenelle would be despised to-day, not because they treat the inanimate, but because they treat it *from the outside*. Let us be very sure that *l'Esprit des Lois* or the *Cité Antique*, dealing indeed with mankind, but from the outside and by the way of analysis, would scarcely be found sympathetic now. Whereas communion with Sirius "in its interior heart-throbs" would seem very commendable.

And it is not in art alone that they expect to find nothing besides the human soul, it is in philosophy, in science. One is familiar with their enthusiasm for that philosophy, the "true" philosophy, the "only" philosophy, which consists exclusively in the description and exaltation of a certain soul-state ("duration"); with their veneration for that "biology" whose whole affirmative intent is to identify the evolution of life throughout the ages with the evolution of an individual consciousness. One realizes this to be the entire thesis of Creative Evolution. In passing let us call attention to their express desire to name these activities "philosophy" and "biology," and not quite simply and properly, the first "psychology," the second "poetry." Always this double will to live in pure sensation and still keep up, from a sort of academic necessity, the intellectual appearances.

Need we say that this attitude of our contemporaries has nothing to do with that of the Seventeenth Century, when it likewise took the human being as the principal object of its attention and declared with Bossuet that "to become a perfect philosopher, man need study nothing but himself"? These men of another time were thinking, like Socrates, of a perfectly objective and scientific grasp of our nature; it had never occurred to them to refresh themselves with a particularly "palpitating" material, "drunk with being human." In the same way, too, the Seventeenth Century appears not to have admitted any literary material except man; certainly the readers of the *Maximes* or the *Caractères*,

would never, like their predecessors, have classed with the "litterateurs" a Montchrestien writing on political economy, or, as their descendants did, a Galiani writing about the wheat trade; but, in their case, this was due to a belief in the preeminent dignity of our species, not to a desire to drown themselves in it.

Moreover, this thirst of contemporary society for the human soul, this will to know nothing else, shines out clearly in all contemporary activities. One may say that all the talk one hears here, whether it be revelations as to the amours of Mme. X . . . or the intrigues of her rival, or the machinations of Z . . . to achieve power or the Academy, consists exclusively in *drinking in the human soul*. And no doubt, to some extent this was always so in the *salons*. Still there were society women once who asked one another what the rouge was made of which they put on their cheeks, and how the stockings they wore were woven; they have even been known to fling themselves on the books which gave them this information, harass the minister who suppressed them, force him to authorize their publication. The ministers of our democratic era on the other hand are quite undisturbed; they can perfectly well suppress all Encyclopedias and everything enlightening to the mind; so long as they do not touch the things that thrill the heart, the governing classes, at least, will not expostulate. Imagine the mistress of the chief of state to-day demanding that the government authorize the publication of Larousse.

DIGRESSION: EMOTION OF SYMPATHY AND AESTHETIC EMOTION

This desire—common, after all, to all ages—that art deal only with the human soul, brings to light the following truth: What the majority are seeking in works of art is the opportunity for communion with human movements, the chance to feel the *emotion of sympathy*; what they want is to love with des Grieux, hate with Iago, tremble with Desdemona, sigh with Phèdre, die with Werther. Furthermore they enjoy the description of those feelings only which they are capable of experiencing: do not go showing the suburbs the drama of a righteous conscience, or women the tortures of a seeker of ideas. For the same reason they go in especially for the theatre among art forms, since it

permits them to espouse human emotion even in its physical aspect, to commune with gesture, to feel what has been called *organic sympathy*. Is there any need to add that the emotion of sympathy is not at all the same thing as aesthetic emotion?

What, then, is aesthetic emotion, for us? Perhaps it is time to say. Aesthetic emotion is the emotion caused by the idea one forms of the *truly artistic* properties of a work of art; for example, the *life* of the work (its life is quite another thing from the life of the characters it presents), its unity of meaning, the adjustment of form to content, the happiness of proportion, the gradation of effect, and so on. A good example, if you will, to borrow one from society people, is presented by Mme. de Sévigné, who enjoyed in Esther "*la perfection des rapports*." Obviously this emotion is of the loftiest and rarest: it presupposes in fact: 1, the ability to form abstract ideas (what more abstract, for instance, than the idea of *perfection de rapport*?); 2, that these ideas remain not at all pure ideas in the mind of their creator, but determine his emotions. The aesthetic emotion is the type of the emotion based on intellect.

We admit, however, that the aesthetic emotion does not exist in its pure state, and that the strongest feeling of the purely artistic value of Tristan, for example, could not fail to be affected by the anxiety which comes from seeing Isolda's misfortunes or hearing the chromatics. Only primary emotions are capable of purity.

We have just seen in the emotion of sympathy a feeling produced by the contemplation of a work of art which has nothing in common with aesthetic emotion. Others may be cited: for example, that caused by the spectacle of a lovable person in distress; that caused by sensing the tenderness of the author for his hero (Chateaubriand's, for instance, for Chactas burying Atala); the emotion caused by evoking the existence of the brain which created the work of art, of the will behind this canvas, in command of all these threads (the need of this emotion explains one's wanting Homer to have existed; for the aesthetic emotion, the Homeric poems, authorless, would suffice); the emotion resulting from a bond which one imagines between the work of art and what it meant in the life of its creator; I confess that I have never watched the curtain fall on the studio act of The Meistersinger without imagin-

ing that it was falling on twenty years of the life and thought of the master, and being moved by this; and so on. . . . All that, to repeat, has nothing in common with aesthetic emotion.

ART SHOULD PRESENT THE PARTICULAR SOUL

But let us discuss their insistence that art, in dealing with the human soul, procure for them sensation rather than any intellectual state at all.

First, then, art must present only *particular* souls, not general types that might give rise to thought. Down with the classical writers who wipe out the individual variations of their characters and show us the *species* only! To think that Molière does not even say whether Harpagon is a noble or a bourgeois! Whether Arnolphe is a provincial or a Parisian! Honour, on the other hand, to the masters from over the channel who tell us the weight of their hero, what he eats for lunch, what bed-clothes he sleeps under; who show us in fact "living" beings.

Let us not confuse this tendency of the moderns with that of a Saint-Evremond, asking the author of Mithradate and Bajazet for "more particularity in his pictures," or of a Segrais praising Corneille because in his works "the Roman talks like a Roman, the Greek like a Greek, the Indian like an Indian." In these critics it was the mere care for truth, not at all the desire to enjoy the concrete out of detestation for general ideas. Besides, the whole "particularity" with which they wanted a hero to be pictured amounted to this: he must "belong to his epoch and to his country." Which still leaves considerable play to generalization.

It must be admitted that our contemporaries are badly enough served, in their insistence on the particular in art: the French art of our time, notably that of the theatre, continues, in spite of its pretensions, to draw the individual badly; characters like those in *La Marche Nuptiale* or *Maman Colibri*, to cite an author most frequently hailed as the creator of "living" beings, seem to us about as particularized, treated, in fact, about as symbolically, as those of Molière or Dumas *filis* even. Not every one is a barbarian that wants to be.

Somebody will object here and point to the taste of our contemporaries for the "symbolic" theatre of M. Maeterlinck. Is it

necessary to reply that what they are looking for in this work is the sensation of uneasiness, the dream-state produced by the spectacle of what is absolutely unconditioned? It would be hard to maintain that the taste for spectacles like *The Blue Bird* or *Pelléas et Mélisande* is founded on a desire to form ideas about the human soul. Here, actually, is the soul state that presides over the taste for this theatre:

"There is an island somewhere in the mist, and on that island is a castle, and in the castle there is a great room lighted by a small lamp, and in the great room there are people who are waiting. They are waiting for what? They do not know. They are waiting for some one to knock at the door, they are waiting for the lamp to go out, they are waiting for Fear, they are waiting for Death. They talk; yes, they speak words which trouble the silence for an instant, then they listen again, leaving their phrases unfinished, their gestures interrupted. They listen, they wait. Perhaps she will not come? Oh, she will come. She always comes. It is late, she will not come until to-morrow, perhaps. And the people assembled in the great room round the small lamp begin to smile and to hope. Somebody knocks. And that is all: it is all of a life, it is all life." (R. de Gourmont, *le Livre des Masques*: Maurice Maeterlinck.)

One sees that the thirst for general ideas counts for little enough in the taste for this "symbolic" art.

ART SHOULD PRESENT THE HUMAN SOUL BEYOND
ALL LAW: HATRED OF DETERMINISM:
SEARCH FOR SURPRISE: THIRST FOR NOVELTY

Another aspect of their insistence on getting excitement from the depiction of the human soul is the desire that the artist present the soul of his hero *beyond all law*, that each new manifestation of it appear *unpredictable* from those which preceded. "The great observers of the soul," announces one of our aesthetes, "whether it be Stendhal, Tolstoy, or Meredith, have never attempted to

write the natural history of a temperament or to treat it as an anatomical preparation. In painting a character they limited themselves to watching him live and surprising him at every turn. When Fabrice makes his way into a church and prays God to aid his projects in simony, we perceive a new trait which completes what we already know of his character but is not mechanically related to his previous acts. No matter how familiar we may be with the generous impulses of Pierre Besoukhof we experience a real astonishment when we see him with such charming ingenuity preparing to assassinate Napoleon." Our aesthete candidly confesses that this is a sheer desire for surprise, quite distinct from any aesthetic desire, for he adds: "This element of surprise, which the scientific mania of the last century banished from the novel, is resuming its place to-day. We find it with joy in such works as Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe*. In future, perhaps, the novel will cease to be a pedantic theorem and become again the faithful mirror of life." [NOTE: The philosophic Testament of William James, by Philippe Millet, in *Le Temps*, August 8, 1911. The article is of the utmost interest for our thesis: in it we catch a representative of mundane culture in the very act of embracing the anti-intellectual doctrine, and perceive his real rebellion against the scientific spirit, at least as applied to things of the spirit.] This "scientific mania," this taste for the "pedantic theory," are simply a concern to make art not "the faithful mirror of life" but an attempt to understand life. But that is precisely what our people will not have at any price.

It would not be fair to set against a worldling of our time the judgement of the seventeenth century in the person of a humanist like Boileau and to quote his famous lines:

*"D'un nouveau personnage inventez-vous l'idée?
Qu'en tout avec soi-même il se montre d'accord,
Et qu'il soit jusqu'au bout tel qu'on l'a vu d'abord."*

Let us rather oppose him by a man of his own condition, who praises Horace "for having taught that if an author undertakes to write a tragedy the subject and the personages of which are entirely unknown, he owes particular attention to the character which he gives to each one. He must sustain this character from begin-

ning to end, without contradicting himself in the smallest detail." (Charles de Sévigné, in his dissertation on the *Ars Poetica* of Horace).

Let us take note, moreover, of their hatred for psychological, and more generally for all, determinism. We know their adoration for that philosophy which insists that psychological phenomena are not determined by heredity, by environment, by any exterior element, but solely by themselves; which holds, specifically, that a work of art or even of speculative thought, though it be indigenous (and romanticism admits no others), shall not depend in any way on the social and political conditions in which it is borne, but "solely on the personalities which arise at a given moment" and must be "absolutely unpredictable." (So Bergson in reply to a questionnaire on "literature before and after the war" in the *Correspondant* of December 15, 1915. See, too, the article in *Le Temps* already cited: "They [Bergson and James] have at last delivered us from the nightmare of determinism." We cite further this cry from another man of the world: "Our admirable Bergson has just smashed determinism"—P. Loti in *Un Pèlerin d'Angkor*.) Every one will recognize the sensational and moving quality in this evocation of the psychological fact, this "absolute beginning" as well as in the belief in the total autonomy of our personality in its relation to the whole world, past and present. All the same let us remember that thirty years ago Taine's doctrine of total determinism also gave romantic souls the chance of having great sensations. "I accept my determinism" was a favourite theme (see the early books of M. Barrès); in those days they used to swoon over the idea of the fatality of the ego. Almost any idea is agreeable to romanticism except a moderate one.

It is to be remarked that in repudiating Taine's determinism they have rejected the determination of the ego by *environment* but have preserved determination by the *past* ("the dead hand rules") and also by *race*. That is because the two latter are lyric themes and occasions for sensation—the former is not.

Finally, they want to see the entire cosmos exempt from law. Not the least relished article in the philosophy which composes the breviary of our men of the world is that in accordance with which the intimate essence of the world is of the same nature as our own consciousness, so that each of its moments, too, is unpredict-

able from what has gone before. The idea of a world organically disordered is a source of emotion of which, it seems certain, no previous French society had ever dreamed.

Let us note moreover their distaste, in any field, for admitting the existence of a law, their pleasure in noting the exception. Do you mention the chivalrous spirit of the kings of France? They bring up Louis XI; the orderly character of French literature in the Seventeenth Century? they cite La Fontaine; the rationalist tendency of French philosophy? they strike you down with Maine de Biran. It is evident that they are irritated by the idea of a rule, of a continuity. The tranquillity of general ideas, the calm you enjoy therefrom, exasperates them. They feel

*"Le caprice inquiet et le désir moqueur
De renverser soudain la paix de votre coeur
Comme un enfant renverse un verre."*

And then, the idea of the exception is productive of paroxysms of emotion. Spinoza was intoxicated with eternity; the laity of our time are in their element when they are intoxicated with the immediate.

Our contemporaries' search for the element of surprise in art assumes another form which we will not discuss because it is so natural to them that they are unconscious of it: it is desire that the subject of a work of art should be *new*. Let us only say that, no matter what people frequently pretend, this desire is not unknown in the most sober times. Undoubtedly in the seventeenth century men of the world like Bussy, like Charles de Sévigné, frankly set invention below composition. An amiable ecclesiastic (Father Rapin) wrote in 1670: "In eloquence it requires less genius to invent things than to arrange them"; Boileau's contempt for invention seems to have received the official favour of his time; Pascal, La Bruyère evidently hold originality of subject matter of small account when they say: "the selection of thoughts is invention," (Pascal) and "the subject matter is not new but the disposition is," (Le Bruyère).

All the same, Corneille remarks in one of his dedications: "You know the spirit of our French people; they love novelty and I am hazarding *non tam meliora quam nova* on the hope of diverting

them better"; in his *Examen du Menteur* he says himself that "he would give his two best plays if he could have invented the subject"; La Fontaine in the preface to his *Fables* writes (not without some bitterness): "What do they want nowadays? They want novelty." By the end of the century Fénelon is almost the only one who persists in holding a low opinion of novelty. For Perrault, one of the proofs of the superiority of the moderns over the ancients is that "there is ten times more invention in Cyrus than in the *Iliad*." Soon La Motte will plume himself because his fables have the merit of invention and La Fontaine's have not. Finally, according to La Harpe, Greek tragedy suffers a real aesthetic blemish because of the Prologue which destroys surprise. The faculty of not demanding the shock of something new from a work of art seems to have been in all ages the property of a very small minority of sober temperaments.

Not alone the subject must be new nowadays: the author's style, his method of composition, his conception of the *genre* he employs, his manner, all must be likewise. The infatuation with Péguy is evidently due in great part to his writing "as no one ever wrote before," and I know a young review which recently reproached Anatole France for having "half-soled the shoes of the centuries," meaning for not having created himself a manner of his own. This aesthetic, too, dates from far back in France. Voltaire praised the authors of the seventeenth century because almost all their works were "in a *genre* unknown to antiquity"; Marivaux declared even before he had found any subject that he was resolved to present a new form of comedy, preferring, he said, "to sit humbly on the last bench in the little troupe of original authors, rather than to be proudly placed in the first line of the populous menagerie of literary monkeys." (These "monkeys" are sometimes called Molière or Racine.) Here is stated, in full consciousness of itself, the romantic religion of originality in art. Let us not forget that recently we had, with certain disciples of Moréas, the no less vibrant religion of *non-originality* (the poet must deal only in commonplaces, and so on).

DESIRE THAT THE ARTIST LIVE THE EMOTION HE TREATS
OF, WITHOUT RISING ABOVE IT THROUGH
THE UNDERSTANDING

But the most significant thing in their wish to get thrills and nothing but thrills from the depiction of human souls, is the desire that the artist should "establish himself in the heart" of the emotion he is handling, that he should "espouse the principle of its internal activity," that he should "become" and "live" this emotion; and not that he should live it in order to understand it the better, but live it and stop at that, quite out of reach of intervention by that cursed intelligence which "arrests the movement of life." We know their scorn—formulated—for the analytical novel where the author remains "exterior" to the soul he paints: and on the contrary their great esteem for those works in which the artist seems "to identify himself with the passion of his character" beyond any inclination to judge. Says one critic, by way of praising an illustrious contemporary, "the novelist has been conquered by his heroine; he has married her madness. Although at first he condemns or approves of his characters, as soon as he begins to paint Alissa, Michel, or Candaule, he has lost the power of judging." A poet of Jeanne d'Arc or the Virgin Mary is exalted to the skies because it seems he has become one with the emotion of his heroine through "pure action," "the pure urge from within," to the exclusion of all contribution of arrangement or order in the description of this emotion. Let us admit that the desire for thrill was never more inventive. What, in fact, is more moving than to watch the very *exercise* of human passion? And what impudence, what novelty, in asking such a spectacle from *Art*. That is something which not Alexandria, not Byzantine Rome, nor Tyre, nor Carthage, nor any "romantic" society had ever imagined. There is, after all, something new under the sun. "I intend," says a poet whom Aristophanes would have loved to ridicule, "I intend to marry the soul of my characters. If I paint women, I must acquire their habits. Ah yes! if I compose Phèdre, I must set about making love." That is an author who should have the devotion of our aesthetes. In Athens, three thousand years ago, he would have been the laughing stock of porters and sailors. The progress is visible.

This desire that the artist unite with the active principle of the emotion he depicts has nothing to do, of course, with that of Saint-Evremond praising Corneille for having "gone to the depths of the souls of his characters *in order to discover the principle of their actions*," for having "descended into their hearts *to see their passions forming* and to discover the most hidden of their movements." For the critic of the seventeenth century it was a question of *seeing* the principles of action, of *discovering* the formation of passions, not of *marrying* or *living* them outside of all judgement upon them.

The desire among our people that art should be emotion itself and not an observation of it, takes still another form: art, they say, must present the emotion in the "indivisible flow" in which it appears to itself, not in the divisions and disarticulations apprehended by the intellect from the outside. Again an infinitely exciting reality—the concept of which, moreover, was very difficult for men and women of the world—and one which no previous society, however romantic, had dreamed of demanding from art. At the most they would have demanded it from mystical activity. Let us note that in this "indivisible flow" there are two human emotions, the idea of the *flow* is a source of sensation for them and that of *indivisibility* is another; our aesthetes know how to bathe in each of them separately, as well as in their confluence.

This desire that art should be life itself and not a view of life taken by the intellect is manifested in several symptoms which are worth commenting upon:

First is the incredible proportion in contemporary literature of novels written in the first person, where the hero says I, tells his emotions and thus re-lives them under the eyes of the reader. This *genre*, in which the author denies himself (except by artifice) those *reflections on the passions* which would have been the chief glory of a Lafayette or Stendhal, seems to be the novel *par excellence* among our contemporaries.

There is also their *religion of the theatre* in so far as that form of art presents us human emotions in the direct mode, seems to show us *life itself*, and allows us, more freely than any other, to forget the understanding through which we see it. Let us observe, in this connection, that what is new in French society is not its passion for the theatre. It has always had this passion and per-

haps more at other times than now; the poorest "collation" in the eighteenth century had its comedy; the duchesse de Bourgogne never moved without a troupe of comedians; the maréchale de Belle-Isle built herself a mansion with an auditorium. What is peculiar to-day is the *aesthetic religion* for the theatre; the desire to see in it a superior form of art. That the art of Tabarin or of d'Ennery, simply because it is the art of the theatre, is superior to the tale or the novel is a thing we should have hardly made our ancestors—or even their women—admit.

It will be hard to say to what an extent contemporary aesthetics is finding its logical consummation in the apologia for the theatre. Does not the theatre seem to be *par excellence* "life itself and not an *idea* of life?" "reality and not a distortion of life made by the intellect?" Moreover some of our aesthetes have become conscious of it. One of them salutes the movement he imagines he perceives by which "the novel would begin to adopt the custom of the theatre." (H. Bernstein—it is true he is a master of the theatre—concerning a novel by M. Binet-Valmer. Wagner, another man of the theatre, utters similar sentiments.) All the same the consummation more necessary still to this aesthetic "of life itself" is the apologia for the comedian; the very commandments of this aesthetic creed imply this apologia: "It is necessary," says one of the inspirers of contemporary doctrines of art, "to relieve the existence of the people who dominate you . . . to coincide with them; *to cease to be a spectator and become an actor.*" (Essais sur les données immédiates de la conscience.) Moreover they exalt a cognition of life ("intuition") which should be "*lived* rather than represented," "*played* more than thought." (Evolution creative). However, either because they are still imperfectly conscious of their own desires, or for some other reason, the supremacy of the art of the comedian over all the other arts is not yet formally proclaimed by our contemporaries. That is a step forward which the aesthetic of life still may take. Evidently they would consider a comedian the supreme artist in so far as he espoused the passion he represented without rising above it to understand it—in exact opposition to the famous Paradoxe of Diderot. Nothing is better proof than the Paradoxe that the eighteenth century, whatever some people say, was profoundly intellectualist.

Finally, another form of their veneration for the art which

presents *life itself* is their enthusiasm for certain products of the spirit which are in effect nothing but a pure "vital urge" which has no way of changing from its state of "vital urge" either to judge itself or to express itself well: chronicles, memoirs, reminiscences, intimate letters. ("For such of these letters—of soldiers in 1914—I would give the most beautiful lines of the most beautiful of poems" says Romain Rolland in *Above the Battle*. It is true that the author explicitly declares his contempt for art.) There is, especially, their cult of the work of Saint Simon, a model of pure *passionate action*, perfectly emancipated from the duty of turning inward to regulate or arrange itself—which is admired as such; they are not satisfied with being moved by it, but confer upon it a real value in art which some even accept as a model. Read the definition which this author gives of his style: "Repetitions of the same word too close to each other, synonyms too frequent, obscurity which often rises from the length of the phrases or perhaps from some repetitions." Does it not seem that one of our new masters, fallen on the field of battle in 1914, would have worn himself out trying to merit the honour of signing this programme? Likewise the esteem—the literary esteem—of these *Memoires*, by reason of the pure passion of which they consist, does not date from our dishevelled age; sixty years ago a critic quite sedate—although he always cared more for humanity than for art in works of the intellect—compared the work of Saint-Simon with that of La Bruyère and barely conceals his higher consideration for the "living" writer who "returns home in a passion and there, pen in hand, without stopping to rest, without re-reading, creates in full life on the paper. . . ." (Saint-Beuve). In the *Portraits de Femmes* the same critic dares to mention the style of these *Memoires* in the same line with that of Bossuet or of Sévigné. In this case also we must go back to non-democratic times to find people capable of understanding that the moving power of a work of art has nothing to do with its value as art; people capable of saying in the same breath that these *Memoires* have "pleased them inexpressibly" and that they are "badly written," that they have "carried them away" and "their style is abominable" (Mme. du Deffand). For a woman of the modern world a work which "carries her away" has by that fact alone the highest value as art; that is even the sole true criterion.

Let us note this judgement by a woman of the eighteenth century on a style which our contemporaries, we know, consider one of the most beautiful in the world. Nothing, besides, characterizes their aesthetic better than this supreme estimation of a style swarming with striking phrases, effective as so many blows of the sword, but whose syntax proves that the author was so incapable of understanding the relation of his ideas that he sometimes fails to complete his sentences. Saint-Simon himself, by the way, does not share in this aesthetic of style. "I do not pride myself," he says, "on knowing how to write well."

Let us also take note of our contemporaries' taste for exhuming rough drafts, preliminary sketches, their veneration for disordered work, work not composed, in which the author did not with his reason "alter the flow of his emotion"; for the Sermons of Bossuet, for example, because they are only sketches; above all for the *Pensées* of Pascal "because they are unfinished." Here they exalt a writer (Péguy) because instead of giving us his completed thoughts he invites us to be present at his gropings; instead of showing us the house he takes us out "on the scaffolding." There they rebuke an editor (M. Gaspard-Michel who brought out Baudelaire's *Spleen de Paris*—I have been present at some of these vituperations) for suppressing the variants he possesses when publishing the work of a master. Their dogma in all this is that "in disciplining emotion, you lose it." As if the whole problem of art is not precisely this: *to discipline without losing it*. As if the author of the *Confessions* or the author of the *Memories of Combours* failed to hold all the emotion while imposing a discipline upon it. As if art did not consist in being able to recognize, in the tumult of passions which press upon us in any given action, which is the central passion, in being able to discern the bond which unites that one to the others, in organizing the others in relation to the centre, realizing, in brief, the command of the great master, "Force derives from order" (Taine). But apparently our aesthetes do not even suspect that the problem exists at all.

To be continued

A POEM

BY TYMOTHY MOSKOWITZ

[EDITOR'S NOTE: After notable hesitation we have decided to open our portal, for the nonce, to one of those humble adjuncts of THE DIAL upon whose integrity we none the less depend—the office-boy. Morally as well as physically set-up by service overseas, his loyalty to our house and nation was by a recent attack at once upon ourselves and upon our country decisively outraged. We shall not offend the sensibilities of our readers by more than alluding to the strange concept of America as “led by the ear.” The slur upon our personal solvency, in the light of this larger insult to our country, we pass over. We confine ourselves to stating, as a simple matter of record, that THE DIAL will continue to register the mellow sunlight of Modern Art and that America, as Senator Harding might so splendidly have put it, is capable of leading herself.

At first blush a cursory reader of the journal in which these innuendoes occur might take undue umbrage, especially since the sheet is a foreign one and since it quite brazenly flaunts upon its cover the head of the God of Commerce. At first blush we say, for printed squarely above the trench-helmet of that all too mercurial god we read the honest name of an honest man, Mr J. C. Squire. Quite rightly indeed did Mr Squire leave uncensored A Letter from America, appearing as it does above the name of one of the most distinguished of the editors of a journal well-known for its almost admonitorily high character. If only every editor spoke as circumspectly as do these good men, the phrase “free speech” would never have acquired that unfortunate flavour which has of late years become attached to it. Nor, however we may feel as regards the deportment of an American citizen visiting even scripturally a foreign country, can we wholly blame the writer of this Letter for his brash libel upon our financial credit. The temptation, at any time to an enterprising editor considerable, was at this juncture peculiarly acute. We have reason to know that a business representative of his journal was at the time in that same country,

busily functioning. The temptation to throw a discreet fistful of dust in those frank English eyes was too great. That is all.

When Tim, for such is our office-boy's Christian name, his young face flushed by the noble emotion of loyalty, brought me these sincere if halting verses, I was thrown in a quandary. And no sooner had I made up my mind that sincerity rather than a mere technical dexterity must for ever be the aim of Modern Art and so of our own dear magazine than the more profound ethical question of truth to fact, quite apart from the artist's personal conviction, flopped up. To begin with, Mr Hackett is no longer so "young" as he was say ten years ago, neither did I (and this one regrets) this season espy him sporting the "sailor-jacket" of a more boyish period, nor has he of late been, so far as I know, except when writing about fiction and verse and drama and philosophy, "at sea." To the contrary, he continues in the back-parlor of his veteran road-house—that going-concern—prodigiously on tap. Neither, and this is far more important, did he devote anything like nine-tenths of the Letter to his own forthright journal. A far smaller fraction covered the bill. But the fine old tradition of free-speech, true or false, we, like Mr Squire, yet do cherish. So here goes.]

AT INSTANCE OF COUNSEL.
SUPPRESSED BY PUBLISHER

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This has been a sad business. Our office-boy has left in dudgeon for the open-spaces of Cuttyhunk, while our publisher has withdrawn in a pet to his estates in the Crimea. And only nine months ago we three set out together, our hearts alight with so comely an ideal.]

ITALIAN LETTER

September, 1920

OF all our writers, d'Annunzio's influence upon our literary youth was the greatest and he had a large number of imitators. During the first decade of our century there appeared a multitude of novels and poems of an erotic and egotistic content, in a slovenly, declamatory style, a hodge-podge of wantonness and conceit—ridiculous imitations of our Abruzzian bard. It was a pestilent cloud-burst which the first breezes of the war were enough to drive off, sending the last vapours of it into the market of cheap patriotic speech-making or the cinematograph.

But even before the war the Virgilian poetry of Giovanni Pascoli, a Livornian writer and professor, contemporary of d'Annunzio, a truly religious nature nurtured on Greek and Latin poetry, had already shown signs of restoring our literature to natural feeling and sober expression. Pascoli was, that is, the Wordsworth of Italian poetry. He had an exquisite taste for realistic scenes, for the domestic sentiments of the common people, for country life. His poetry was brief: a stroke of faultless grace in which often the gentleness of the religious idyll and the buoyant gracefulness of Tuscan expressions united in short cadences of popular rhythm or in rapid pictures of peasant life. But Pascoli did not at first enjoy much popularity, and his first volumes, *Lyricae* and *Poemeti*, really his best, were almost unnoticed by the public. But little by little the better class of people, weary of the thunder-striking muse of d'Annunzio, turned to this modest son of Virgil and even our government came at last to recognize his high merits by bestowing upon him the Chair of Italian Literature at the University of Bologna. It was at that time that Pascoli published his *Poemi Conviviali*, which added much to his fame.

On the death of the poet and after the war was over, Benedetto Croce, our great Neapolitan philosopher and critic, bitterly attacked the works of Pascoli in his review *La Critica* and let loose upon the Peninsula a shower of differing opinions on the merits

of Pascoli's poetry. Magazines and reviews echoed the call and *La Ronda*, the most aggressive of them, began a referendum which after all did not result in favour of Pascoli. It is possible that Pascoli, in his determination to write with scrupulous impressionism of domestic sentiments, often strayed into untruth and mannerism, but this much can not be denied, that the perfect clearness and precision of his poetry, the skilful use of Tuscan rhetoric and, above all, his profound poetic vision of country life have created in our young writers a new feeling, an aspiration towards a clearer and more elegant art of writing. The present attempts in verse and prose which are being made in Italy on the ruins of the d'Annunzian and futuristic schools bear the sign of a nobler foundation laid down by Pascoli.

Among the youths who displayed the more caustic opinions on Pascoli's work is Vincenzo Cardarelli, unquestionably the most promising Italian writer of our time. Cardarelli is a refined product of culture and enthusiasm. His personality is modern and complex. He aspires to something European. And since his greatest admirations next to Leopardi are Goethe, Baudelaire, and Nietzsche, he attempts in his writings, mostly fragmentary, to be versatile and universal at once. He is something of the essayist and the poet, his prose is sapient and rhythmic, and his criticisms are contemptuous. This lyric form of criticism is not infrequent in our literature and Renato Serra has written some delightful pages in his *Saggi Critici*. Those written by Cardarelli in his *Prologhi* and *Viaggi nel Tempo* are of his best. Side by side with his lyric writings there are in these volumes some subtle metaphysical discourses upon Socrates, Don Giovanni, Women, Decadence, and Genius, of such prophetic and unearthly beauty that they resemble the murmurings of a Mephistopheles. Unlike Leopardi, Cardarelli is not a hopeless dissenter, but a cordial, though ironical, believer in beauty and life, seeking to find its highest expression among the young. He is associated with the poet Aurelio Saffi in the management of the review *La Ronda*, published in Rome, to every issue of which he contributes fragments of fantastic fables of Genesis, pathetic pictures of events of the Old Testament intermixed with a Hamlet-like soliloquy by the Lord upon his handiwork and his intentions. This writer, more than any other, illustrates our assertion that

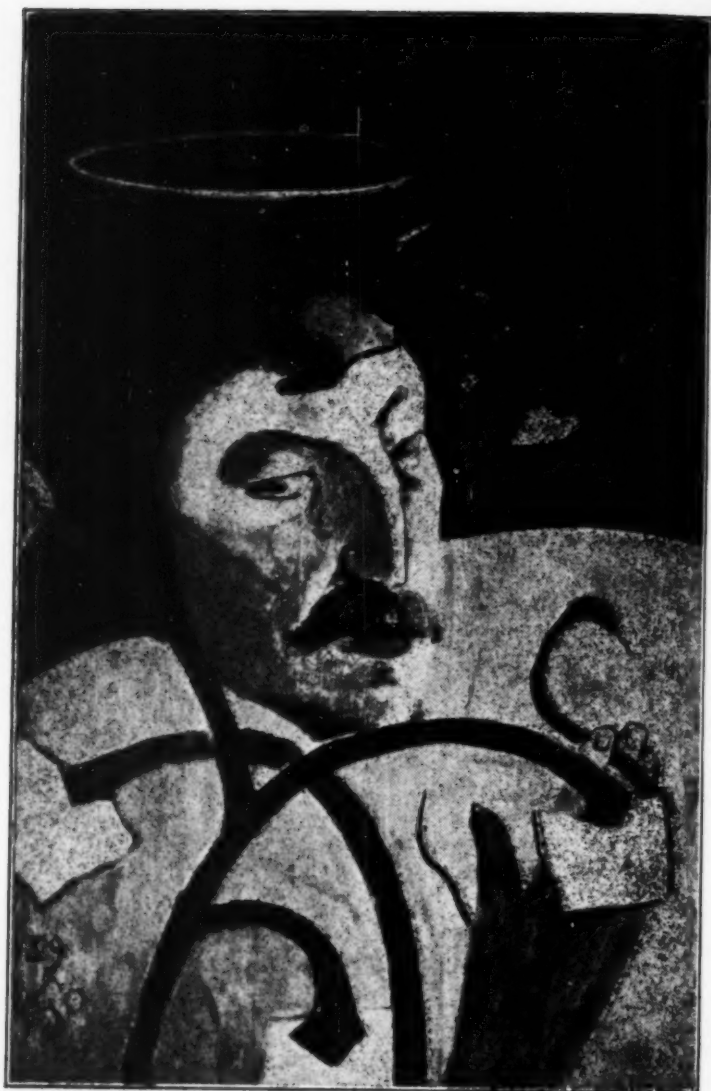
our literature is retracing its steps towards the undefiled fountain of poetry given us by the divine Dante, Petrarch, and Leopardi.

The same tendency, though somewhat less pronounced, pervades the works of the Florentine writer and painter, Ardengo Soffici. He has now to his credit five volumes of art criticism and eight volumes of impressions and research. He is a spontaneous writer with a free adventurous spirit. He lived for seven years in Paris, frequenting the ateliers of the neoimpressionists and the country places of Guillaume Apollinaire and Remy de Gourmont. During the war (he was twice wounded) he wrote two books, *Kobilek* and *La Ritirata del Friuli*, which for vigour and clearness of tone are the best Italian books on the war. Soffici was the first in our country to establish fragmentarism, that is, writing in short strokes, giving brief impressions like the items of a diary. In this manner of writing he succeeded marvelously well because his language is nimble and abrupt and he is gifted with felicity of expressions, the experience of a rover, and the delicate eye of the painter. In fact, the greatest merit of Soffici is in his language. It is full of elegance and virility and whether he demolishes the fame of some academic painter, exalts the art of some obscure neoimpressionist, some Tuscan dabbler or cubist, or gathers into a bright cluster the impressions, ideas, little scenes of Tuscan life, his pages are always filled with light and breathe the healthy freshness of the woods of the Florentine country.

CARLO LINATI

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Courtesy of the De Zayas Galleries

SELF-PORTRAIT. BY PAUL GAUGUIN

MODERN FORMS

This department of The Dial is devoted to exposition and consideration of the less traditional types of art.

GAUGUIN'S RE-BIRTH

BY HENRY McBRIDE

IT was inevitable that the discovery made by so many Americans last winter that an artist by the name of Gauguin once existed should have been followed by the printing of a mass of memorabilia for Sunday supplement consumption and also by a reissue of Noa-Noa, the fantastic and partly autobiographical prose poem that M. Charles Morice had punctuated, re-spelled and seen through the press in the days of the author's first renown. To those who had vainly talked Gauguin into deaf ears at the time when the colourful canvases hanging in Vollard's shop with 1200-franc price-labels on the best of them were the whole of the story, the easy credit that Gauguin obtained last year with a public that had come to believe him great as an artist as he was ruffian, thanks to Mr Maugham's novel making the villainy if not the art comprehensible, was not the least of the season's surprises; particularly as this public heretofore has loved only virtuous artists.

Possibly it was an entirely new section of the community that Mr Maugham awakened to an interest in art.

Be that as it may, all of the advance-guard, those who knew ten years ago that Gauguin was great, smiled sub-acidly at the situation. Though they saw that the *événement* was all to the good, they saw too that it was not of their making; it was not for them to shout "hurrah." Certain sticklers for facts exclaimed against the too fervent admiration that the young people in Greenwich Village lavished upon Noa-Noa, holding that however well the artist painted he was not a writer, and that if the book had merit it must be due to the touching up it had received at the hands of M. Morice, a professional scribbler. There was no especial debate upon the

subject, but after the first and somewhat vulgar enthusiasm of the novel-readers had abated, this remained one of the points that the advance-guard felt that it might, without loss of self-respect, look into; this and the insufficiently explained re-birth of the artist at the age of twenty-eight, or thereabout, from counting-house clerk to painter.

To acquire mastery of an art after one has become an adult is rare. It is so rare that some positivists hold that it does not occur. There is, of course, the case of Victor Hugo who began making drawings in pen-and-ink when much advanced in years and who arrived finally at considerable ease of expression in that medium, though without being acclaimed a master of it. The late Will Price, architect—a somewhat emotional thinker—was converted into a belief in the re-incarnation of souls merely by a study of the precocity of Mozart, so he told me. "You know very well, if you know anything about art," he added in his combative way, "that mastery of any technique comes only after an immense amount of labour. Now somebody must have laboured to have acquired that technique, but Mozart didn't. It is clear enough to me that the soul of some great musician lived again in that boy." It was not at all clear to me, however, and I recall experiencing distinct disappointment at this explanation of Mr Price's theosophy—for at that time I rather wished to be a theosophist myself, if it were possible—theosophists appeared to have such good times with their beliefs—but all I said was: "How interesting!"; for to Mr Price it never paid to be combative in return. A little later in reading Mozart's life I saw that it was not necessary to call upon the supernatural in diagnosing his "case." To have been born of a musical father, to have been talked to in the cradle with violins, to have participated at the age of three in an elder sister's music lessons, to have begun one's own lessons at four—and it is no longer a surprise to learn that a finished education in an art had been obtained by an infant—nor that the little Wolfgang, after a while, was bored by the games of his neighbour's children "unless they were accompanied by music."

In the Gauguin instance something vastly more mysterious occurred. Victor Segalen, in his *hommage* accompanying the Gauguin Letters to De Monfreid coolly says: "*Que le lecteur daigne enfin s'étonner: dans cette chronique d'un grand peintre âgé dès lors de*

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plus de vingt-huit ans, il n'a pas été question de peinture." M. Segalen apparently believes in miracles. In the twinkling of an eye the counting-house clerk, aged twenty-eight, became a master-painter. M. Morice and the other chroniclers of this life also believe in miracles, in this miracle—only—I am not in a hurry. There are still some things to be looked into.

For instance, in M. Morice's book it is related that early in Gauguin's history, when he was yet a child in Peru, or perhaps shortly after the return from Peru, a maiden aunt or some other prejudiced observer, remarked, after an inspection of a bit of the boy's wood-carving: "*Tiens*, some day he will be a great sculptor." There is a hint, here, that the germ of the art fever was already working in the youngster's veins, for children so praised are apt to work at least for more flattery, even if the impulse be not ingrained. The "*beau Dimanche*" that M. Segalen mentions as the beginning of the career may not have been the only "*beau Dimanche*." It is a matter for regret that Gauguin's biographers have slurred over the induction into professionalism, for if modern conditions may still work miracles we should love to revel in the details. Besides, the "how" a great artist came to be great is the most interesting part.

I have heard the letters called "harrassing," but to me they are not, in spite of the heroic and unequal struggle with disease, poverty, and death. The drama is too perfect to be depressing. The note of doom is sounded at the beginning and after that the letters march with a Grecian implacability to the inevitable end. Gauguin appears to have been a complete artist. (He could never have been a complete counting-house clerk!) In a burst of admiration he once said that Degas was "a rare example of what an artist ought to be." Degas, who knew that soul freedom was as necessary as air to geniuses, would, I am sure, have said the same of him. But many of Gauguin's envious rivals called him "*Monsieur sans-gêne*." His special type of honesty is a thing the narrow-minded never understand. It is death-bed honesty and far outclasses in mere genuineness the out-pourings of Jean-Jacques for whom honesty became a *métier* and therefore, in spite of himself, artificial. But it is not likely that skeptics will arise to dispute the paternities of Gauguin. He seemed to scatter infants about the earth with the careless ease of an Adam and had difficulties with Eves only when they happened to be civilized.

"Ah! oui, le mariage, vous en savez quelque chose mon pauvre Daniel, comme moi: on ne s'en tire qu'avec quelque chose de cassé . . . Voyons ce qu'est la loi: Vous avez un enfant adultérin qui vous ressemble et qui vous donne entière satisfaction—Il ne peut hériter.—Par contre vous avez un enfant légitime qui ressemble comme deux gouttes d'eau à votre concierge et qui est un atroce gredin.—Il hérite légitimement, après avoir été éduqué de droit, de force, Morale!"

Bitter, bitter as that is, the sensible can only laugh at it. It is like the "bad word" that even Emerson permits to the philosopher who discovers that he has a nail in his shoe. Gauguin had something more serious to think about than "the succession." Besides, the experienced know that there are more systems of morality than one, and the chief business of man is to get located in the one that suits.

Victor Segalen says this honesty of Gauguin's extended even to his handwriting, which drooped or prospered according to the hour, with distress or hope. "It became vigorous in the testamentary moments or when explaining questions of art. It was literally poor and with a borrowing air when it concerned money affairs or discounted bills. When Gauguin touched his 'little inheritance,' one saw plainly by the writing that he had money in his pocket." Contacts with money, however, in Gauguin's case, appeared to be singularly momentary, and the letters are one long appeal for cash, tubes of colour, and what not. There was only Georges-Daniel De Monfreid to whom to appeal, and the demands upon him are incessant enough to make the careless feel that there must have been something in the "*sans-gêne*" epithet of Gauguin's enemies. But here again the generous may look between the lines at a solid friendship that warranted such dependence. Gauguin relied upon De Monfreid with a perfect and beautiful simplicity that can be matched in modern annals, perhaps, only in the correspondence of Wagner with Liszt. De Monfreid is so excellent a friend that the student of Gauguin emerges with the idea that the story contains two heroes. It seems, almost, that without a De Monfreid there would not have been a Gauguin.



A FIGURE. BY CARL SPRINCHORN





A FIGURE. BY CARL SPRINCHORN





A FIGURE. BY CARL SPRINCHORN

THEY RIDE THROUGH THE OLIVE GARDEN

BY DUDLEY POORE

On the rocky hillside
under the olives
I heard their voices.

Through the level sunlight
a doe fled past me
panting with terror,
and after her, leaping
through the shining gorse flowers,
a dappled jaguar
neared her and caught her,
clung with burnished talons of bronze
to her shuddering back,
sank thirsty teeth
deep in the warm red flesh of her neck.
Then she threw back her head
sharply, baring her teeth,
pawing with tiny ebony hoofs,
and cried and stumbled.

Then I heard their voices
and suddenly
I was among horsemen,
among a flashing
of silver and scarlet
brocaded raiment,
among spearmen marching
with bannered spear shafts.
From a hidden turn
of the rocky pathway
they were upon me;

they poured upon me
in shining raiment,
huntsmen and retainers
with a shouting and clatter of tongues,
with a snarling of trumpets,
blaring of horns.
In the narrow way
they bore upon me
with a clangour of bridle bells,
with a brazen shouting
of huntsmen backward-straining
at the taut leashes
of slim, tugging greyhounds,
with a waving of polished
crimson spear shafts.
Sharp hoofs rang close upon me,
foaming bits splattered froth over me.
Choked by the hot bitter dust,
jostled by the spearsmen
against the hot wet necks and flanks of the horses,
blinded by the smarting,
sunlit and billowing dust clouds,
I was falling
beneath sharp prancing hoofs.
Then a hand grasped me,
drew me back by the garment and flung me
free of the press,
free of the sharp prancing hoofs,
and the dust and the tumult.

Then I leaned and watched them.
Dazzlingly sun-splotched
they were passing before me,
hawk on wrist,
in proud raiment,
with smiling inscrutable faces,
with the beautiful calm eyes of princes.
From under feathered crowns
they gazed down at me curiously

and passed with bridle bells ringing,
amid laughter and tumult,
holding ever their downward tumultuous course,
bearing with them the slain doe
to the baying of hounds,
whining of spotted hunting cats,
snarling of jaguars in dappled golden coats,
screaming of falcons.

Then came in their train,
daintily stepping,
laden horses in twos
and tawny swaying camels bearing high bales.
The wind of their passing
was heavy and sweet
with cassia and cinnamon.
Pungent amber-coloured dust was sifting
out of spicy bales
tossing on the tawny backs of the camels,
bales covered with coloured cloths
of orange and apricot,
with chattering monkeys perched upon them,
gibbering and grimacing,
with black, leathery palms
pulling at the rents in the bales,
with wizened fingers
setting sharp white teeth in the firm, juicy flesh
tearing the dusty, sweet figs out of their packing,
of the fragrant, bright-rinded fruits.

And after these, trooping on foot,
with a chatter of tongues,
came young men and old
in peaked hats, in round hats, in turbans,
in hoods and in bonnets,
in robes of russet and vair and primrose
trimmed with the skins of ferrets,
walking in pointed shoes
with a mincing gait,

404 THEY RIDE THROUGH THE OLIVE GARDEN

nodding their peaked hats
in disdain.

Then I called them, saying:
O Worships, who is it you follow,
treading so daintily
on such fastidious toes,
to the tune of baying hounds and of trumpets?
But they only mocked and pointed
and would not answer,
only laughed and nudged each other,
saying spitefully:
He wished to be trampled on by the horses.

So they passed and the rocky way hid them.
The tumult of their passing grew fainter,
blowing along the wind
up the olive-silvery slopes,
till at last, far below me,
round a spur of the hillside,
they broke again into the late sunlight,
winding ever downwards
in a twisted, golden line,
like a shining lizard
curving his jewelled body
against the dun-coloured slope.

Then my heart grew small and tight,
twisted and troubled by their beauty,
constricted with tight cords of desire
to follow them in their journey
whithersoever it might lead,
over what seas and plains,
over what distant mountains,
even to the gate of a fabulous city.

Wherefore I hurried after
in the gathering twilight
down the way they had taken,

but they were nowhere.
I stood alone on the dark hillslope.

Then the olive trees shivered
and the moon rose.

THE ISLAND OF PARIS: A LETTER

September, 1920

PARIS, the paradise of artists irrespective of their merit or demerit, lying like the background of Rodenbach's portrait, invites one to anything but a critical attitude. Conversation still exists there, and at least one "salon où l'on cause" continues so naturally and with so little flurry and waving of semaphores that one is skeptical about its being the last. There might be one in the next garden; for gardens—not back-gardens, but gardens—still exist within two stones-throw of the river, as do fifteenth century stairs and remnants of sixteenth century classic ornament, and sphinxes, in the styles of both before and after the Egyptian campaign. There are indeed two under my window that might almost have grinned back at Voltaire.

In the faces of whom one comes seeking the triple extract of literature for export purposes; seeking a poetic serum to save English letters from postmature and American telegraphics from premature suicide and decomposition.

Alfred Vallette is very tired and thinks, probably rightly, that the now lifeless *Mercure* will continue through its own inertia, and that no one else will be able to start a rival publication in France.

André Gide presents an interesting facial mask even if one be more than inclined to agree with the pungent contributor to *Cannibale* that "*La Nouvelle Revue Française me fait penser à une maison de santé dont les pensionnaires s'ils n'y meurent pas, ne peuvent sortir qu'idiots—*."

Paul Valéry bears unquestioned the symbolic and ghostly plaid shawl of Mallarmé:

*"Un fruit de chair se baigne en quelque jeune vasque
(Azur dans les jardins tremblants), mais, hors de l'eau,
Isolant la torsade où se figure un casque
La tête d'or scintille au calme du tombeau."*

Valéry's style continues in its own, that is to say in somewhat Parnassien, somewhat symboliste tradition. The author of that excellent prose *Soirée chez M. Teste* [to appear shortly in *THE DIAL*] has come out of his original frame even less than Mr Yeats has. He represents the poetry of his generation (born 1872) in its purity, absolutely unaffected by journalism, absolutely unaffected by popularist rhetoric, absolutely and blessedly without "bondissants tocsins."

And at the antipodes André Spire (born 1868), represents the most uncompromising *vers libre*, vaunting itself better than regular verse on the sole ground that "if it is bad it is just nothing and that if regular verse is bad it has the impertinence to deceive people by pretending to be something or other."

And the severest critic can be no more severe than Spire himself, saying "I come off in about one poem in twenty." (I have not counted the successes in Spire's new volume *Le Secret*, but it contains abundant proof that André Spire is a poet, however much time he may spend in being a Zionist, or in the bonds of necessity.)

The promise of Paul Morand's *Lampes à Arc* is simply fulfilled in his *Fueilles de Temperature* (Fever Chart). The style is roughly that of the modern stuff in my own *Lustra* and so far as I know he is the only man who uses that *modus* better than I do; possibly because he derives from the broader tradition and has not relied upon *Lustra* as sole source and stimulation; I take it, in fact, that he has not relied on *Lustra* at all but has evolved in a direction in which any one familiar with French poetry up to 1910-14 might normally and plausibly have seen fit to let it evolve.

Which brings us to the young and very ferocious. The young and very ferocious are going to "understand" Guillaume Apollinaire as their elders "understood" Mallarmé. They have raked up Mallarmé's *Jeu de Dés*, which was published in an Anglo-International periodical called *Cosmopolis* before the Futurists had cut their eye-teeth.

The young began in Zurich about two years ago, they have published papers which are very, very erratic in appearance, and which contain various grains of good sense.

They have satirized the holy church of our century (journalism), they have satirized the sanctimonious attitude toward "the arts"

(toward the arts irrespective of whether the given work of art contains a communication of intelligence). They have given up the pretense of impartiality. They have expressed a desire to live and to die, preferring death to a sort of moribund permanence.

They are so young and so healthy that they still consider suicide as a possible remedy for certain troubles. (Note that the middle aged invalid and hypochondriac seldom commits this error of enthusiasm.)

They talk about "metallurgie" and international financiers whose names are never mentioned in the orderly English press.

They have as yet no capital sunk in works and they indulge in the pious hope that their remains will not be used to bore others.

(One should at this point quote the apposite lines from Horace, but the only passage I can find is

*"cur tantum diffuderit imis
Oblivionem sensibus,"*

which is not the citation I was looking for.)

Louis Aragon, Phillippe Soupault, André Breton, Drieu La Rochelle contribute to Littérature and are published Au Sans Pareil. They are, I think officially, on good terms with Tristan Tzara, Picasso, Piccabia.

One wonders, a little vaguely, how to introduce them to a society where one is considered decadent for reproducing pictures by Cézanne.

Aragon presents the equivalent of the hokku or of a Chinese "short-stop" in Casino des Lumières Crues

*"Un soir des plages à la mode on joue un air
Qui fait prendre aux petits chevaux un train d'enfer
Et la fille se pâme et murmure Weber
Moi je prononce Wèbre et regarde la mer."*

He presents Trigonometry and acrobats,

*"Oh
qui me donnera seulement à macher
les chewing-gums inutiles*

*qui parfument très doucement
l'haleine des filles des villes."*

Carrying on the satiric heritage of Laforgue, and of symboliste sonorities this group is already taking its place in the sun, by right of intelligence, more than by right of work yet accomplished.

Despite which the Nouvelle Revue Française is the edifice which chiefly greets the enquiring visitor, and its tone, to change the metaphor, suggests rather London "Bloomsbury" in mélange with rather stale strawberries and rather left-over cream.

Proust is undoubtedly a fine writer, his vignettes of people are indubitably entertaining, he has undertaken the by no means trifling task of reenriching impoverished French literature—after a diet of Dickens, Dostoevsky "and the Russians," and Balzac, and he has iced his compost "deliciously" with symboliste "nacre"; and the result is the nearest the French can get to Henry James, whose complete works would be in process of translation and publication were it not for the paper shortage and the high cost of production.

If this view of Proust is superficial, I can but record it as my state of opinion for the moment. Proust, when objective, is a master of style and expression. I have yet to be convinced that he has the centre and weight of James Joyce, as more habile, more easy, more accomplished.

Morand writes in his early ode to Proust:

*"Ombre,
née de la fumée de vos fumigations,
le visage et la voix
mangés
par l'usage de la nuit,
Céleste,
avec sa rigueur, douce, me trempe dans le jus noir
de votre chambre
qui sent le bouchon tiède et la cheminée morte.*

*"Derrière l'écran des cahiers,
sous la lampe blonde et poisseuse comme une confiture,
votre visage gît sur un traversin de craie.*

*Vous me tendez des mains gantées de filotelle;
silencieusement votre barbe repousse
au fond de vos joues,*

Je dis:

—Vous avez l'air d'aller fort bien.

Vous répondez:

—Cher ami, j'ai failli mourir trois fois dans la journée.

*"Vos fenêtres à tout jamais fermées
vous refusent au boulevard Haussmann
rempli à pleins bords,
comme une auge brillante,
du fracas de tôle des tramways.
Peut-être n'avez vous jamais vu le soleil?
Mais vous l'avez reconstitué, comme Lemoine, si véridique,
que vos arbres fruitiers dans la nuit
ont donné leurs fleurs.
Votre nuit n'est pas notre nuit:
C'est plein des lueurs blanches
des catéyas et des robes d'Odette."*

All of which smacks a little of Huysmans and A Rebours and is excellent literary criticism as well as capital verse.

Against the Nouvelle Revue, Julien Benda plays a lone and quite skilful hand; it may be that Schopenhauer had pre-condemned most of the Rue Madame writers, where he says that when men won't put down their thought briefly and clearly the reader may rouse his suspicion. Certain questions, like that of vice and of the Roman Catholic church are wholly irrelevant to literature. The Nouvelle Revue has been stamped "succursale to the Vatican" and even Gide's *Au Caves* has not wholly dissipated this accusation. If Proust writes of Sodome and Gomorrah we may be certain, or fairly certain, that he will write as "a physician, as a savant, as an historian."

For the rest one is very glad of Benda's analysis of the symptoms of "corryphées"; if Benda is not the rich loam in which a new literature may germinate he is at any rate a fine disinfectant. No foreigner has the patience, no foreigner wants to or will take the time to analyse a decadence which he, himself, can easily avoid;

and if one has had any sort of Faith in France one can but be refreshed and delighted when in the midst of a rather depressing jungle one finds this clearing of common sense, this place open to wind and light.

Gourmont in *Les Livres des Masques* had been faced with a different problem: that of establishing a whole new generation of writers; he did the work admirably with a method suited thereto; and since abused. To its abuse Benda is an excellent corrective. He is not on the other hand an upholder of the new pseudo-classic "movement," though classicists in search of support have leaned upon some of his writing.

Parenthesis: (To get the fine flavour of Benda's acumen one should perhaps know a little more than the foreigner is likely to know; and to convey the trend of this, or to convey a little the aroma of just that *Nouvelle Revue Bloomsbury*, I can perhaps do no better than to quote, even without changing the order from the French sentence to English, the words of a travelling Belgian, much impressed. He said "He" . . . [I won't say that "he" wasn't Suares, and I have, in sincerity, forgotten whether it was or was not another of the great lights of the Rue Madame].

He said, "Oh he is wonderful, that man."

And I said, "Poet?"

"Oh . . . No."

And I said, "Prose?"

And he said, "Oh no, he can not write *une seule* line of poetry. He can not write a single line of prose."

And I: "What the devil does he do? Critic?"

"Oh no, he can not write a *seule ligne de critique*."

And I: "But . . . eh!! . . . ?"

And he: "No, no, no-o-o, he can not write a single line, he can make the critique, *mais vous lui donnez une idée et il le developpe . . . il . . . il DEVELOPPE!*

And whenever I tell that story in Paris, I hear:

"*Voui, ah . . . c'est l'image tout crachée de . . .*" And then the name differs, for the portrait fits several heads.

It is the symptom of the pre-dada epidemic. I learn they are taught to do it in the schools.)

EZRA POUND

BOOK REVIEWS

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL THEORY

SOCIAL THEORY. By G. D. H. Cole. 12mo. 220 pages. Frederick A. Stokes and Company. New York.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY. By C. H. Douglas. 12mo. 144 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Howe. New York.

LAW IN THE MODERN STATE. By Leon Duguit. Translated by Frida and Harold Laski. 12mo. 248 pages. B. W. Huebsch. New York.

NATIONAL GUILDS AND THE STATE. By S. G. Hobson. 12mo. 406 pages. The Macmillan Company. New York.

PARLIAMENT AND REVOLUTION. By J. Ramsay MacDonald. 12mo. 180 pages. Thomas Seltzer. New York.

IT is surprising how many of the practical questions of life could be restated in the generic question: What is the individual's proper relation to society?

Should the Lever Act be used as the basis for an injunction against the coal-miners? Should college presidents encourage students to take jobs as strike breakers? Should the current skepticism about the effectiveness of political action lead one to remain away from the polls? Should union compositors on reactionary newspapers refuse to set up copy they know to be false?

These are samples of the particular interrogations which arise as we discuss to-day the general problem of the individual's relation to those about him. Any week's news will suggest as many more, quite as interesting and important.

The way the problem is put is in itself significant. We are not so much interested to-day in the sanctity of institutions or of established concepts or of current forms of procedure, as we are in getting to the heart of the whole problem and in asking: what is the purpose and aim of all social activity? And the answer, as it is re-

lected in representative fashion in the five books listed above, is remarkably unanimous. The individual is recognized as being at the centre of things. It is for individual people and their satisfaction that the social turmoil is ultimately endured—if indeed it is endured for any reason at all! To be sure, the values in personal life are not of equal worth. There are the instrumental and the intrinsic values; the non-productive and the productive; the permanent and the transitory. And the life and happiness of this generation can not be sensibly considered and adjudged without relation to future generations. The individual life clearly gets its meaning from its social implications in the future no less than in the present. Personality may be safely regarded as sacrosanct only when the personal life is conceived in terms sufficiently broad, positive, creative and re-creative to assure that people's social qualities and impulses are cultivated. For we know that personality, in so far as modern psychology is helping us to understand it, is a resultant of native and acquired, possessive and creative powers, all of which require play if there is to be wholeness to life.

By asking of social activities whether they make or mar personality we are not, therefore, setting up a narrow or mean criterion. We have passed the point in social theorizing where happiness is confused with "individualism"—where that means every man for himself. We have rather reached a point where the development of the individual life in power of self-control, aesthetic appreciation, creation, and affection is recognized as basically desirable. Quality in living, abundance of life, freedom and fulness of intellectual and spiritual growth—these are the infinitely valuable purposes of social activity. And they are purposes which can be realized only as the individual is in an intelligent and cordial relation with his fellows. No one has said this better than Professor Dewey.

"Democracy means that personality is the first and final reality. It holds that the spirit of personality indwells in every individual, and that the choice to develop it must proceed from that individual. From this central position of personality result the other notes of democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity—symbols of the highest ethical idea which humanity has yet reached—the idea that personality is the one thing of permanent and abiding worth, and that in every human individual there lies personality."

Yet after all there is not much quarrel to-day with this type of personalism. There is a growing sympathy for a "conscious experimentalism" in which personal happiness is the result sought. The difficulty is rather with methods. The writers here being considered are discussing methods in three related but separable fields: in political affairs, in industry, and in finance.

The central problem from the political angle concerns the individual's relation to the state and the state's power. And the secondary question relates to the machinery under which safe and sound relationship among members of the state may be maintained. The problem of state sovereignty is to the fore because of the practical importance which the state has assumed in the last fifty years. And in the recent war years the consequences of the state's display of power have been especially conspicuous. Conscription, compulsory arbitration, governmental operation and control—these have all precipitated the question: wherein does the integrity of the individual lie if the state can exercise complete power over him? Is a sovereign state a safe state if we hold this purpose of personal fulfilment prominently in view? Indeed, does not the very size of the modern state make it impossible to avoid centralization, bureaucracy, uniformity, stagnation? And does it not create problems which by their very magnitude stagger the intelligence and render the individual impotent to live his life because of their overpowering weight and insistence?

There are big questions to which an answer is not quickly reached. The tendency exemplified by Cole and Duguit is toward a denial of state sovereignty, and a substitution of plural or federal sovereignties. But this idea is manifestly repugnant to Ramsay Macdonald and to S. G. Hobson. It is well, therefore, to have the main difference in point of view outlined.

The writers who deny the validity of absolute sovereignty base their position on a change in relationship which they claim has already largely taken place in fact. The state is in fact so impaired in its exercise of absolute and ultimate power by church, by trade unions, by organized civil servants, by professional associations, that it is idle any longer to impute absolutism to it. There is a whole world of economic affairs which gives every evidence of being beyond the effective power of the state. Moreover, such a collapse of unified authority and the consequent building up of special au-

thority within the several groups which continue to exist because they perform an indispensable function, is a process which augurs well for individual autonomy. Each group has necessarily that fraction of the ultimate power which it requires in order to perform its acknowledged function. Sovereignty, in this view, is power to command within the field that a service is being rendered; the amount of authority exercised is limited to that needed to render the service effectively. Thus the individual instead of being at all points subject to the state, is subject at various points to the several groups of which he is a member. Because the sovereignty has been distributed—federalized—the autonomy of the individual stands a far greater chance of being assured.

To all of which the reply is that such exhibitions of power as are to be seen in functional groups to-day are derivative. They are granted either explicitly or implicitly by the people as a whole organized and speaking through the state. Just because they happen to have a degree of necessary authority within their own jurisdiction does not prove that the community's ultimate power over its members has been diminished.

Moreover in the event of deadlock in the discussion of issues between groups, there must be some appeal body, some arbitrating agency, and such an agency should be representative of the interests of the people as a whole—a phrase which is, by the way, particularly hateful to the pluralists.

Unless, also, there is a common purpose animating the different groups of which society is to-day composed, their clash of interests must end in compromises in which every consideration but the public good is given weight. It is hard to conceive that a mere balancing of the claims of consumers versus producers, for example, would result in stability and justice unless other than selfish motives had play. And there is, of course, as Professor Morris Cohen said in a recent address, always the chance that a strategically situated minority can take things into its own hands and become the *de facto* sovereign group.

Out of the controversy one conclusion rises clearly. All are agreed upon the desirability of restricting within reasonable limits the powers which the state can ordinarily exercise. The manner of doing this is subject for discussion. And we find Ramsay MacDonald taking a resolute, and I believe unanswerable, stand in be-

half of the efficacy of political institutions as the fundamentally necessary expression of public opinion and judgement. His discussion is a kind of modern addendum to Mill's great essay on Representative Government. The following paragraph well illustrates the quality and content of his thinking:

"Therefore, at the very outset, in expressing disappointment with the results of Parliamentary government, we must begin by admitting that the first point to be made against it belongs not to itself, but to the masses. They have not been intelligent enough to use it. Now, nothing can take the place of intelligence. We can have a revolution by force, we can have a temporary dictatorship of the intelligent democracy, but continued progress must before long come back to its source in the minds of the masses. We cannot substitute new forms of government for present ones, but unless the people become 'the governing classes' in fact as well as in name, the rotten foundation will show itself by cracks in the superstructure. Furthermore, we can by an interesting academic analysis show how complicated is modern Society, how difficult it is to create one sovereign authority in the State effectively claiming both a political and an economic allegiance, but none of that, nor all of it put together, helps us to get away from the difficulty which the absence of wisdom in the use of power creates. Where there is no intelligence there will be no unity. Where there is no comprehension of unity and no conception of how political action can secure it, a mere change of systems of government is like a change in style of architecture without discarding the rotten bricks which made the previous building uninhabitable. Socialists, revolutionary or evolutionary, can never get away from this. It dogs them like shadows; it dooms all their efforts and schemes to futility until they change it. If the people do not understand Parliament, better government is not secured by splitting up its functions."

Duguit's idea as to the way to save the individual from oppression at the hands of the state is arrived at by a wholly different approach. His emphasis is upon duties rather than rights. The duty of the state is broadened by the need for "industrial service."

"Our most basic needs, our postal system, railway transportation,

our system of lighting, are satisfied by organizations of such economic complexity that a moment's difficulty in their operation threatens the foundations of social existence."

A sound theory of state action in relation to individual welfare must therefore now turn from consideration of rights to performance of services. And in the performance of services power necessarily resides in the group which is serving to a sufficient degree to enable it to carry out effectively its responsibilities.

"So it is that the idea of public service replaces the idea of sovereignty. The state is no longer a sovereign power issuing its commands. It is a group of individuals who must use the force they possess to supply the public need."

And by Mr Cole the application of his favourite ideas of "organization by function" and self-government, is held to give personality maximum scope in social life. For organization by function means that there naturally grow up distinct groups or associations to perform necessary services. There are associations for political purposes, for vocational, religious, sociable, intellectual, and other purposes. And to each association the individual concedes a degree of power over his action in its particular realm. But the sole basis for the exercise of such power is the group's competency to function and fulfil its obligation in a manner which the individual is bound to respect.

This brings us to the second aspect of the political problem. What is the mechanism for relating individual desires to state or other associational actions? It is this necessity of consulting the wishes of its constituent members which creates every group's problem of representation. Hence to methods of securing representation, political and economic, the attention of social theorists is turned. Ramsay Macdonald advocates a second chamber for England which shall be a vocational body subordinate to the present House of Commons, but elected from vocational groups.

Mr Cole believing that it is impossible for the individual to be represented as a totality, argues for division of the representation upon a functional basis; "what the representative professes to represent is not the whole will and personalities of his constituents, but

merely so much of them as they have put into the association, and as is concerned with the purposes which the association exists to fulfil." As an alternative to a complete and single delegation of representative power to be displayed at three different stages—legislative, executive, judicial, he proposes that "each functional form of association has and is its own legislature and its own executive."

This need for representation in determining upon the action of "functional association" is not satisfied to-day. Consideration of the practical issues which this need raises leads us on to a discussion of the individual's and the state's relation to industry, since there we find the biggest of the functional associations. That there must be a representative government in industry is conceded by all these writers, and there must further be a representative structure which shall relate the economic to the territorial activities. But the place of the consumer in all this representative government presents a problem on which wide divergences of opinion appear. Mr Hobson contends that the state can not represent the consumer; Mr Cole holds that it can. Mr Macdonald finds the distinction between producer and consumer too "academic" to follow, when used as a basis for governmental organization.

The Webbs once made a distinction which admittedly must be recognized. They said that the producer was predominantly interested in how production took place and under what conditions, but that when it came to considering what was to be produced, how much, the quality and the price, the consumer was an indispensable party. If, then, as Duguit suggests, state action as public service is replacing the notion that state action is in fact power exerted in a private interest, the task of discovering and having foreknowledge of people's needs, desires, and demands might very conceivably become a state function for which suitable administrative bodies would be created—as indeed they were created by the several states which engaged in the Great War.

If, however, the state through some intelligently constituted administrative organ is to voice the public needs and represent the ultimate consumers, it has by implication a function that involves it in the financial and credit problem. It is this phase which engages Mr Douglas exclusively and Mr Hobson in part. Their problem is the socializing or democratizing of the power over accumulated wealth and over the extension of credits to new enterprises. That

a new outlook on this confusing question is required to make headway toward its proper understanding, will be clear to those who have graphed Mr Douglas' thesis—or indeed to those who are familiar with the writings of our own Professors Veblen and Mitchell. Yet Mr Douglas is by no means clear as to the details of his case, although his general contention has substantial force.

My own understanding of the problem is this. Present production is always being carried on with goods and materials made available by past labours. Future production can only be carried on as there is an excess of goods produced over those immediately distributed. For, while people are producing in the future there must always be the means of their contemporary support. This surplus of past and still unused goods and materials is what we are really referring to when we speak of capital. And capital is obviously secured by retaining out of present production something over and above that which is being immediately consumed.

The cash value of these saved goods is stated in terms of dollars; and the amount of capital which society thinks of to-day in terms of dollars, is in reality a supply of goods which are made available for use by those who hold the capital, whenever, as we say, credit is extended. But credit is extended only on terms which give the holder of the capital a return over and above the return of the actual value of his capital. The cash tokens of this excess return are distributed as interest and dividends; they accumulate in banks; they are held by corporations as undivided surplus.

By a process of consolidation which has proceeded even faster in banking than in industry, the money representing our present social surplus of production over consumption, comes more and more under the control of relatively few in the community. These few thus become the actual controllers of the economic life of their fellow citizens. For it is they who do this extending of credits; it is they who say where productive energy shall be applied. And the consideration which guides them in their decision is the degree of profitability of the contemplated enterprise. And by profitability is meant the probable excess of surplus which remains to be secured after actual costs are met. The larger this surplus can be, the more credit they can extend subsequently on the same profitable basis to other presumably profitable ventures.

Under this arrangement, as Mr Douglas points out, cost is al-

ways cumulative. For cost always includes not only the actual charges for material, labour, and interest charges on the required capital, but also the accumulated charges made by the whole series of past lenders of the capital which has gone into the making of the materials and all the resources which are needed and are available. The price of an article is, of course, the sum of the actual cost plus the profit. And that profit becomes part of the cost of all articles subsequently made to the extent that the first article is necessary and contributory to the making of them. Yet even if this does not take place, the recipient of the profit (that is of the present goods available to be used while new ones are in process of manufacture) can reinvest his profits for a return, which means again that the cost of the goods made with his capital are enhanced by the amount of his return in additional profit.

But the situation is in reality by no means so simple as this; for our discussion thus far has assumed that the available capital represented actual goods. Unfortunately, the problem is complicated by the methods of inflating credit now in use. If the banker can extend credit for a consideration even though he has not in hand capital representing bona fide savings out of past production, he can earn more money; although in the process of such inflation the credits that he extends buy less and less actual goods—due of course to the fact that his credit manipulations have not succeeded in increasing the actual stocks of goods on hand which are available for use during the process of the future production.

The banker can under present conditions build up in various ways a credit structure which gives him a fictitious volume of credits—fictitious in the sense that they do not represent goods; which gives him also control of production and future profits of production, and thus progressively makes him the recipient of the world's purchasing power.

The present credit machinery is thus in a decidedly unwholesome way. It operates in a manner which is socially expensive, unscientific, and undemocratic. Yet when it comes to the remedies, Mr Douglas' book is weak. He occupies less than twenty pages with his proposals, and those are by no means clear. His service is none the less a signal one; for he calls attention in a truly novel way to the problem which is increasingly engaging the thought of social engineers, as of central significance in economic organization. For

the individual's relation to the state and industry is indeed shorn of most of its possible vitality and developmental value, if at the centre of the social labyrinth stands an odd monster who by credit control, literally governs the productive life of the community. Whoever will point out any of the ways in which this control is now exercised, is making it possible for us to fore-arm ourselves for a profound struggle.

There is genuine insight, candour, and practical helpfulness in contemporary social theory. It is recognized that the purpose of the state, as Aristotle said, is to foster the good life. And that good life has never been better characterized than when he also said that "happiness was the activity of the soul in the direction of excellence in an unhampered life." It is recognized increasingly that quality in the individual life is a supreme aim. It is recognized that we can afford to subordinate abstractions to people because we know more and more of the promise of human life—of the possible splendour of personality. Indeed, while the doctrine of the "perfectability" of human nature has fallen into desuetude, social theory to-day assumes the essential integrity of human nature and seeks eagerly through a social organization soundly motivated to buttress individual and social life against those beclouded moments when, as Paul said, though we would do good, evil is present with us.

ORDWAY TEAD

SUPER SCHOOLMASTER

INSTIGATIONS. By Ezra Pound. 8vo. 388 pages.
Boni and Liveright. New York.

IT has been observed that Mr Ezra Pound's critical prose is, as a rule, neither prose nor criticism; and this one is willing to admit, in order to save time and because Mr Pound has admitted it himself with embarrassing frankness. ("This essay on James is a dull grind of an affair, a Baedeker of the continent. . . .") There are still several fixed ideas in *Instigations* and a number of repetitions of cadence that have not been attacked. But a brief and belated review is scarcely the place for this sort of thing, nor for the defence of Mr Pound's method, or lack of it, in judging, which I should some time like to undertake.

An important point, however, about Mr Pound's critical writings, which has been generally neglected, is this: they do satisfy two very conspicuous demands of the American public; the demand for "constructive criticism," and the demand for "first rate school teaching."

In his essay on James, Mr Pound makes an academic distinction between prose and poetry.

"Most good prose arises, perhaps, from an instinct of negation; it is the detailed, convincing analysis of something detestable; of something one wants to eliminate. Poetry is the assertion of a positive, that is, of desire . . ."

Well, Mr Pound is a poet. He doesn't write prose; we have admitted that. His destructive remarks are limited to funny oaths and insults; no reasoned attack, no analytic slaughter of the enemy. His time, his energy, he applies to stating, without much fuss, what he finds good, and why.

That people, stupid or not, should demand affirmations and constructive criticism, if only as a novelty, when our young writers are all so busy writing advertisements for a living as to make it impossible for them to praise anything in their off hours, is not

surprising. The odd thing is that people should not take pleasure in affirmations when they are handed them. And yet they decidedly do not. We pretend that it is the destructive activities of the Russians of which we disapprove; we were indeed shocked when they murdered the Czar. But we only became really indignant when they began to improvise a government. Thoroughly popular affirmations, one believes, are always either destructive in intent, like patriotism, or insincere, like advertising. Insincerity of tone is the first lesson for the advertiser to learn. Consider the slogans of the day before yesterday: "All the news that's fit to print." "Make the world safe for Democracy."

All this is intended as an explanation of Mr Pound's failure to impress the multitudes who ask for "constructive criticism." If he would wrap up his prejudices in cosmic tendencies and add a little sensational gossip to his technical discussion, he might put over those very unpopular causes, classical learning and modern literature, to a somewhat larger public. But he agrees too well with that public's avowed belief in the necessity for good school-teaching, to do his work in other than schoolmasterly fashion. Apparently he has in mind a special public, a class of students, almost, to whom he is engaged in delivering this correspondence course of lectures. The idea of this class sustains and encourages him. All through *Instigations* we find him admonishing his students: "Laforge is an angel with whom our modern poetic Jacob must struggle." "If James *had* read his classics. . . ." and so on. He never doubts for a moment that in order to write permanent work, in order to discriminate between permanent and bad work, a man must know the classics from Homer to Gautier. As fast as he can get round to it Mr Pound is filling up the gaps in the curricula of his misguided but indispensable colleagues, the professors; and at the same time he is carrying forward their work from the point where they always leave off and wait for a literary man to clear the way.

Is nobody aware that a contemporary writer is actually giving a course on the Comparative Literature of the Present, that a first rate literary man, a poet, with the rarest gift for translation is bothering to teach school? Poetry lovers may grieve, but Dr Flexner would do well to take notice.

W. C. BLUM

WEARY VERSE

GEORGIAN POETRY. 1918-1919. Edited by E. M.
12mo. 196 pages. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York.

IT is a profound labour to read this book. Not because, let me hastily say, there is nothing good in it, but because it is all so dreadfully tired.

Is this the exhaustion of the war, or is it the debility of an old habit of mind deprived the stimulus of a new inspiration? It is an interesting question, for the fatigue is undeniable. Here are nineteen poets, in the heyday of their creating years, and scarcely one of them seems to have energy enough to see personally or forge a manner out of his own natural speech. They are all respectable poets, each knows his trade and can turn out good enough verse on an old model, but how strangely one man's contribution dovetails into the next man's! This is happily not true of all, but it is true of the majority. Try it—for instance, who wrote:

“But this shall be the end of my delight:
That you, my lovely one, shall stoop and see
Your image in the mirrored beauty there.”

And did the same man write:

“And Cleopatra's eyes, that hour they shone
The brighter for a pearl she drank to prove
How poor it was compared to her rich love:
But when I look on thee, love, thou dost give
Substance to those fine ghosts, and make them live.”

Is this he again, or another:

“Thy hand my hand,
Thine eyes my eyes,
All of thee
Caught and confused with me:
My hand thy hand,

My eyes thine eyes,
All of me
Sunken and discovered anew in thee."

M.
York. And who is responsible for this:

"Dear Love, whose strength no pedantry can stir
Whether in thine iron enemies,
Or in thine own strayed follower
Bemused with subtleties and sophistries,
Now dost thou rule the garden . . ."

If the reader will play fairly and guess a bit, I think he will find himself sufficiently bewildered. The answer to the riddle is purely arbitrary. The book says that Francis Brett Young is the author of the first quotation, and the other names, in order, read: W. H. Davies, John Freeman, and Edward Shanks. But, for all we can see to the contrary, the names might be jumbled about in any order without causing the slightest confusion in style or

The reason is quite plain, Mr Young, Mr Davies, Mr Freeman, Mr Shanks, are merely taking the place of our old friends, Brown, Jones, and Robinson; or, to telescope the whole after the manner of a composite photograph, we might name them collectively, John Doe. In other words, these gentlemen are not writing at all, it is their poetic ancestors who are writing, they have made themselves ouija boards for the recrudescence of a dead song.

There are notable exceptions to this, I am glad to say, and I shall come to them later, but on the whole, the book seems pale and spectre-like, haunted by the ghosts of England's vanished bards.

There is really no excuse for this, for even if these English poets choose to ignore the fresh vigour of American poetry, they have Masfield in England, and Ralph Hodgson, and Aldington, and Sassoon. It is stuff and nonsense to try and raise such echoes into the dignity of a poetic creed as Mr Squire and Mr Shanks are constantly trying to do. All literature is against them, good poets are not echoes and never were, and that is the long and the short of it. I am told that Mr T. S. Eliot is having a great influence in England, and although I am not a complete admirer of Mr

Eliot's style, I can well believe that he is needed in a country where Mr Young stalks abroad mellifluously bemoaning the dures of poethood in such a new and striking phrase as: "Whither, O my sweet mistress, must I follow thee?" His own words, farther on in the same poem, are more than portrait; they are prophecy: "The pillared halls of sleep echoed my ghostly tread."

He is a wonder, this Mr Young, I can hardly tear myself away from him. What a memory he has, to be sure. Where have we

"With all the joy of Spring
And morning in her eyes"?

It is foolish to ask where; it would be much more sensible to put it "where not." Certainly Mr Young challenges the spectres right smartly. He speaks of "snow upon the blast," of the "livery of death"; his moon is quite comfortably "hornéd," with the accent all nicely printed over the last syllable. But let us give him his due, his cacophony is original. Read this aloud:

"The frozen fallows glow, the black trees shaken
In a clear flood of sunlight vibrating awaken."

But we must not leave Mr Young alone in a glorious isolation, that would be to do him too much honour, for does not Mr Davies speak of "Yon full moon," and Mr Abercrombie complacently watch while "The sun drew off at last his piercing fires"; even Mr Gibson, who is usually above such diction, permits himself to call the sea "the changeless deep."

One could go on poking fun for ever, there is matter for it, but the thing is not funny; on the contrary, it is desperately sad. They want to be poets so much, these young men. They know they have something to say, they feel it doubtless, but they are like people uttering words in a dream; in the cold light of day, it comes perilously near nonsense, because it is nonsense to repeat by rote a thing which does not express one's thoughts. There is atrophy here; this stale stuff is not merely stale, it is pathological. We know what these young men want to say, the strong spirits among them have told us they want to say how deeply they love England, how much the English countryside (the most beautiful countryside in the world) means to them; they detest war, and long for the

past which can not come back, and they hope fiercely for a future which, if they can, they will see to it shall be better. But the power to set down all this has been weakened by strain. They have not the energy to see personally, or speak with their own voices. The will to do so is strong, the nervous strength necessary for the task (and it requires much) is lacking.

The English countryside is here, but in all the old tones and colours. Surely never book was so swayed over by the branches of trees. Nightingales and thrushes abound, but seldom does the poet get them alive on the page; he loves them, but he slays them, and more's the pity.

This is not always true. Mr Drinkwater's Chorus from Lincoln is very England, although not quite so fine as his In Lady Street, which is not in this volume, and so is Mr de la Mare's Sunken Garden, and Mr Monro's Dog is fully successful. Even Mr Davies gets himself sometimes, since he can write:

"Blink with blind bats' wings, and heaven's bright face
Twitch with the stars that shine in thousands there."

Mr Davies tries to be himself, and it is unfortunate that we often wish he would not. When he describes a lark as "raving" above the clouds, we feel that his vocabulary is unwarrantably scanty, and it is nonsense to speak of the "merry sound of moths" bumping on a ceiling. Merry—watching the tortured struggles of the poor things to get out—merry! He tells us that he is the "dumb slave" of a lady who brings "great bursts" of music out of a harpsichord; "deaf" I think should be the word, for I doubt if even a Liszt could force that frail and delicate instrument to "great bursts." Or, perish the thought, was the lady really playing on a piano, and did Mr Davies merely think "harpsichord" more poetical?

Yes, they do try, but often only to make a mess of it. When the nightingale does not sing, Mr Shanks observes: "Nor has the moon yet touched the brown bird's throat," which is mighty fine writing of a kind usually found in Parlour Albums and Gems from the Poets for Every Day in the Year. Mr Nichols has been reading the dictionary, his boughs are "labyrinthine," the blossom of a lime-tree is a "hispid star of citron bloom," and "sigils" are burned into his heart and face. A sort of passion for

the archaic seems to have got hold of him, we have "flittest, prof-ferest, blowest, renewest," all in four lines. Most of these poets love "thees" and "thous," that horrible second person which every-day speech has happily got rid of. But Mr Nichols is a good poet, only he does not hold himself up. To speak of the trunk of a tree as "splitting into massy limbs" is excellent, but he spoils it by having the branches "bowered in foliage," and yet the man is often full of insight. Of a squirrel, he can say: "He scrambled round on little scratchy hands," and what could be finer than the "peaked and gleaming face" of the dying man in *The Sprig of Lime*? That whole poem touches a very high mark, and sets Mr Nichols quite apart from the John Does.

As one glances through the four volumes of Georgian Poetry, one can not help wondering on what principle they are edited. Scarcely on that of presenting all the best poetry of the moment, it would seem, since Richard Aldington, F. S. Flint, the Sitwells, and Anna Wickham, have never been included. Mr James Stephens, who has been in since the beginning, has vanished, which is a great loss; and Mr Hodgson, who appeared in the second and third issues, has also gone. It is understandable why Mr Chesterton, as belonging to an older group, has left; but Mr Masfield, by all the laws of literary relationship, should surely have remained. Is the editor, Mr Marsh, sole arbiter, and if so, why? When former contributors disappear, do they remove themselves, or are they assisted to depart? And again, in either case, why?

It is horrible to reflect on the power of an editor. Poets, at the mercy of editorial selection, may well tremble, reflecting on the fate of the Dutch painter, Vermeer, who vanished for nearly three hundred years from the knowledge of men because a contemporary writer, with whom he was so ill-advised as to quarrel, omitted him from a list of painters which was destined to become the text-book of future generations.

Mr Marsh edits with well-defined prejudices, evidently, but, on the whole, he has accomplished much, for he has brought the authors of his anthologies a wide publicity. For those who go out, others come in. Mr Graves and Mr Sassoon, who, with Mr Squire, appeared first in the 1916-17 anthology, are the chiefs of the new comers. The most powerful poem in the book is Mr Sassoon's *Repression of War Experience*. The war made Mr Sassoon a poet. He needed to be torn and shaken by a great emotion; he has found

this emotion
poems, w
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this emotion in his detestation of war. Nothing stronger than these poems, which are the outgrowth of his suffering, has been written in England since the war "stopped our clocks." It would be hard to make a selection of them, and really it does not matter, one side of a heart is a good deal like the other side provided it be a real flesh and blood heart. In this case, it is, and wherever you take it, you get the same sensation. There is no rhetoric here, we are not treated to erudite expressions nor literary artifices, and for that reason these poems, and Repression especially, come perilously near to being great. I say "perilously," for what is Mr Sassoon going to do now? When was Everything Sang written? Perhaps that points a new departure.

Mr Sassoon and Mr Graves feel so much that they can afford to joke about it. Mr Sassoon's joking is a shade more bitter, more ironical. For instance, *What Does It Matter?* is a trifle harder and heavier than Mr Graves' *It's a Queer Time*, which unfortunately is not in this volume. Neither is *I Wonder What It Feels Like to be Drowned*. But one can not have all a man's collected works in an anthology, and we have got that fine thing, *A Frosty Night*, and the possibly even finer, *The Cupboard*. Mr Graves is that delightful being among poets, a *faux naïf*. He runs his ballad forms hard, but so far they do not fade upon the palate.

Miss Shove is a notable edition to this year's anthology. She has originality and a saving sense of the grotesque and macabre. *The New Ghost* is excellent.

Of the original contributors, Mr Abercrombie's poetry is always a strange mixture of the quick and the dead. He builds live tales on a pattern of rusty pins. The result is according as one feels about the vexed question of subject and treatment. I confess that I find Mr Abercrombie worthy of respect, but dull.

Mr Davies has ardent admirers, and I am quite aware that my making him sit as part portrait for the highly estimable John Doe will probably cause much offense. If only Mr Davies would always write poems like *A Child's Pet*, would always keep to such natural speech as that in the first four lines of *England*, I would readily subtract him from the sum total of my composite hero. But Mr Davies has read books, and they have remained in his mind alien and undigested. Therefore he must give his quota to John Doe, and I regretfully beg his pardon.

Mr de la Mare is scarcely at his best in this volume, although The

Sunken Garden is very charming. But I can not forgive him his last line with the false rhyme. False rhyming is often a most happy device, but scarcely here, where there have been no other such rhymes in the poem, and for the last line—particularly when he had a perfect rhyme in his adjective! Clearly the sound did not trouble Mr de la Mare's ear, but it teases mine horribly.

Mr Drinkwater is a poet who must be read in a certain mood. His poems do not yield all their fragrance if they are hastily approached or violently attempted. They grow on the reader as of something becoming conscious. They seem extraordinarily simple, by every preconceived canon they should be dull, and behold, they are neither the one nor the other. The best of them, that is, and two of the best are here: Moonlit Apples and Habitation, while Chorus from Lincoln, the first half especially, is nearly as good. What is Mr Drinkwater's charm, how does he escape the sensation of echo, considering that he chooses to write in a traditional mode? To analyse it with any care would take up too much space here; in brief, I think it lies in his utter abandonment to his poem, in his complete sincerity in regard to it; in his straightforward, unself-conscious love of what he is writing about. He is a quiet poet, he keeps his drama for his plays, but his dramatic sense has taught him the secret of creating atmosphere. Moonlit Apples is beautifully moony. But this simplicity and this atmosphere are not accidental; they are built up with delicate touch after touch throughout the poem. One could wish that In Lady Street had been included and Southampton Bells left out, but, on the whole, his selection is one of the best in the book.

Mr Gibson's Cakewalk is a good poem, and so is the first stanza of Parrots; the latter is a complete poem by itself, the second stanza adds nothing, it even detracts appreciably. Why must Mr Gibson bring in his heart? The Parrots did so well without it.

Mr Lawrence's Seven Seals is in his most mystical and passionate vein. The poem is serious and exalted, but it is a pity that it should be his only contribution; it would stand better were it companioned. As a poet, Mr Lawrence is rising in stature year by year; his last volume, Bay, is the best book of poetry, pure poetry, that he has written, although it does not reach the startling human poignance of Look! We Have Come Through. It is unfair to Mr Lawrence to be represented by one poem, the editor should take heed and give us more of him in future.

Mr Monro improves steadily. I have already mentioned his beautiful and exceedingly satisfactory Dog. I wish I had space to quote it. It is not only good poetry, but good dog. Mr Monro's work is gaining in muscle. Beauty it has often had, but now there is a firm structure under the beauty—see, for instance, *Man Carrying Bail*. The *Nightingale Near the House* was a bold challenge to Fate, but Mr Monro has come through fairly successfully. His nightingale lives and sings, and not too reminiscently, which is much for a modern nightingale to do.

For the newer men, Mr Squire is a clever fellow. His criticisms, even if one disagree with them, are always interesting. His poetry is clever too, and that is not so useful an attribute in poetry. But he has done some good things. *August Moon*, with its marvelous description of moonlight on water, is not here (really we must quarrel with the editor for leaving it out) but another of his best things, the *Sonnet* is. Few modern sonnets are so good as this; the last two lines are magnificent. *Rivers* begins well, with an original and fluctuating rhythm which gives the lapsing and flowing of a river to a remarkable degree, and the slight change between the first and second stanza is well conceived. But then he becomes tangled in his own creation, the metre stiffens into a convention, becomes hard, unimaginative, and cold, and the poem loses itself in a long and rather stupid catalogue.

Mr Turner, who appears for the second time, has a nice little quality—he has his own turns, and a very pleasant whimsical touch:

"The thronged, massed, crowded multitude of leaves
Hung like dumb tongues that loll and gasp for air"

gives an effect we have all seen, most vividly. "Tinkling like polished tin" has the thin sharpness of tone of a small stream, and "old wives cried their wares, like queer day owls" is very nice. *Silence* is a good poem, but the best of those here is *Talking With Soldiers*, with its refrain "the mind of the people is like mud," and then the dreaming iridescence.

Of the remaining poets—but why catalogue the virtues or record the faults of John Doe?

AMY LOWELL

BRIEFER MENTION

THE CHORUS GIRL and Other Stories, by Anton Chekhov, translated by Constance Garnett (12mo, 301 pages; Macmillan). As is usually the case with Chekhov, so in these eleven sketches and one full length story ignominious humanity gets caught in its particular fact and character; not with much charity, but in a great manner of seeing and by a fine hand for execution. The vital traits of narrow lives and their daily scene are set down with delicate, considered specificity, and with some ironical pity, but no illusion; romance would need less native concentration upon fact and event. The tales have each its special sharpness, but how little are they a moralizing and how much a sophistication, an enrichment of experience! Romance to the fluffy, scriptures to the Pecksniffs, Chekhov, realist, we hear saying merely, but how incomparably: "Such fools!"

26 JAYNE STREET, by Mary Austin (12mo, 353 pages; Houghton Mifflin), holds the mirror up to American unrest with a steady hand, occasionally so absorbed in the reflection that it forgets the story, but succeeding in the end to a definite emotional expression of its theme. Both in subject and in treatment, Mrs Austin's work discloses its kinship to the social novel of Wells.

TRUE LOVE, by Allan Monkhouse (12mo, 375 pages; Holt), adheres to a course as conventional as its title, unrelieved by plot invention and unredeemed by emotional significance. It is the last word in war novels merely in the sense that it is the most recent. The same mould has been used before—with similar results.

MARGOT'S PROGRESS, by Douglas Goldring (12mo, 334 pages; Seltzer), is vigorous, varied, and colourful. There is driving power behind Mr Goldring's inspiration; he peoples his novel with positive creations, and sees to it that things actually happen. Even where his skill is not yet in full focus, one feels the momentum of his purpose. *Margot's Progress* is vividly conceived and keenly developed.

THE HUSBAND, by E. H. Anstruther (12mo, 301 pages; Lane), is another example of a type of volume rapidly gaining great vogue in England, in which conversation is composed of such gems of repartee as "Really!", "Oh, come!", and "That's splendid!" In further accordance with the formulae, Penelope is very refined, as is proved by her hanging "an exquisite Dürer" alongside of her roommate's "two lurid, allegorical posters." And she is proper to the end, waiting until the author kills the wife, when she consents to marry the Husband.

WOMAN, by Magdeleine Marx (12mo, 228 pages; Seltzer), never quite fulfils its magnificent gesture. The author has undertaken the rôle of surgeon in a psychic clinic, standing with glittering scalpel poised above the feminine ego, and we turn from page to page with bated breath, momentarily expecting that mysterious organ to be laid bare. But in the end we have to content ourselves with diagnosis; the operation is not performed. A febrile study in temperament, unmistakably French.

WINDMILLS, by Gilbert Cannan (12mo, 188 pages; Huebsch), is a heavy-footed satire on the war; its chief interest lies in the fact that it was written in 1914 and not in 1920. Mr Cannan sets up a simulacrum of the British Empire and throws stones at it; after the idol is satisfactorily demolished the British Empire remains and Mr Cannan is still scolding away in an excited voice. Yet what he says is inexpugnably true; it is only his prose which is ineffective.

THE RELEASE OF THE SOUL, by Gilbert Cannan (12mo, 166 pages; Boni & Liveright). An English novelist's attempt to release his soul from the bondage of novel writing has resulted merely in enmeshing the soul of his latest book in the cobwebs of pseudo-mysticism. Art, Work, and Religion, according to Mr Cannan, are the only paths which lead out from the jungle depths of stupidity and materialism. There is little Art in his exposition, and less evidence of Work. And it takes more Religion of a charitable nature than Mr Cannan preaches to restrain one from saying that the author of this work has released his soul so very successfully that it has disappeared.

POEMS 1916-1918, by Francis Brett Young (12mo, 99 pages; Dutton), shows the influence of nothing that has been written since the death of Tennyson. Evidently Mr Young set out to recapture the old beauty; he has achieved his aim exquisitely, without a false rhyme, a colloid sentiment, or a misplaced apostrophe. His poems form more than a book; they are a Tendency; the goal toward which the Georgians are progressing.

COUNTRY SENTIMENT, by Robert Graves (16mo, 140 pages; Knopf), lacks the full richness of *Fairies* and *Fusiliers*, but remains a delicious collection of ballads and lyrics. *Hawk and Buckle*, *After the Play*, and *A Song for Two Children* give a fair taste of Graves' humour, sense of words, and ability to create atmosphere in phrase. *Country at War* puts to shame so vulgar a hymn of hate as *The Picture Book*. Graves is better at fairies than he is at fusiliers.

SOME SOLDIER POETS, by Sturge Moore (12mo, 147 pages; Harcourt, Brace & Howe), is a volume of belated comment on the work of Grenfell, Ledwidge, Brooke, and others. Within a fixed circle, Mr Moore's criticism is honest and impassioned, but his vision is limited by the horizons of the nineteenth century and he abhors anything modern or irregular. Even he goes out of his way to say of Yeats that his verse skims on the surface of prose. "You watch the skater as the surface warps under his swift passage, and expect that in another moment he will be in it, floundering like any Walt Whitman."

THE MODERN BOOK OF FRENCH VERSE, edited by Albert Boni (12mo, 299 pages; Boni & Liveright), is an excellent anthology of translations, although one asks why both Swinburne's and Lang's versions of Villon's *Ballade des Pendus* are included when Swinburne's is the better Villon, and why Ernest Dowson's rendering of Verlaine's *Le ciel est par-dessus le toit* is preferred to Alfred Noyes' more Gallic one. The volume will please any lover of France and should be valuable in courses in comparative literature for the manner in which the many translators from Chaucer to Ezra Pound unite in giving a concordant impression of the French genius.

JEHOVAH, by Clement Wood (12mo, 116 pages; Dutton), won the Lyric prize of five hundred dollars for 1919. Aside from this distinction, the poem boasts that of a rather vigorous vocabulary. But if it won the Lyric Prize, it was hardly for its lyricism. The dispute between the Israelites and the Kenites in the days of David is not very thrilling when a dispute between the Bolsheviks and the British is going on in our own days. And the inevitable contrast with Scriptural poetry is inevitably discouraging. Still, the poem is dramatic, the characterization interesting, and some of the passages genuinely powerful.

THE LIFE OF LORD KITCHENER, by Sir George Arthur (3 vol., Illus., 8vo, 1095 pages; Macmillan), is the official biography, done with infinite pains, with a slow-moving impressiveness of detail, and with the proper attitude of defending or glossing over the errors and weaknesses of the subject. One fails to discover the mythological strong man, as one fails to discover the great K. of K. whose myth did, before his death, call an army into the field. As a representative of the course of Empire Kitchener is more interesting than as a personality; the biographer has not attempted to reverse this order and the book is therefore good history but not light reading for hero-worshippers.

MY CAMPAIGN, by Major General Charles Vere Ferrers Townshend, K. C. B., D. S. C. (2 vol., 8vo, 719 pages; McCann), is a book of extraordinary fascination. The commanding officer of those British forces which fought Kut and Ctesiphon, were besieged and finally surrendered, writes a magnificent story without patches, and with considerable literary skill. His all too brief chapter on strategy and his speculations on war and politics, as well as the humaner interests of his campaign will absorb chief attention—which is a pity because the layman ought to read the technical chapters and learn what war is. Legislators might read between the lines to discover how policy—and not the most intelligent policy—can destroy men and armies in fruitless endeavours and how gallantry and heroism can still give a flair of decency to war.

THE THEATRE

THE good critic always begins the Season with a capital S and gradually is worried into the lower case, ending about mid-May with "the run of the theatre." That may be the result of sheer mental incapacity to react. It may be that the best plays open earliest.

In any case they opened too early this year for me to see more than one bad play and early enough for one very good one. The knowledge that O. P. Heggie is playing in *HAPPY-GO-LUCKY* and that *THE BAT* is becoming something of a municipal mystery, that, in fact, some thirty pieces are with some success holding the boards, can be put down as so much information. There are other matters for reflection.

ONE of these is the lingering superstition that a foreign hit can be made over and put over in America. It has happened, but I think that a majority of our huge financial successes were native. In the case of *SPANISH LOVE* I do not know how much Mrs Rinehart and Mr Hopwood took out or put in. What they offered, in a production which is uncertain between the glamour of the new style and the security of the old, is the flesh and blood without the skeleton of a melodrama of passion. They love that way in Spain, but they do not play that way in the American theatre. The presence of Russ Whytal, so cool, so faultless, and of James Rennie, chosen for type, made visible the impossibility of the play itself.

ENTER MADAME is the work of Miss Gilda Varesi, as part author and star, and of Mr Brock Pemberton as producer. It is exceedingly to their credit, and it is good to know that its success was immediate. The play is intelligent rather than smart. So was *THE CONCERT*, which the plot of *Enter Madame* neatly reverses. The moments of profound humanity in Bahr's masterpiece are not reproduced, perhaps because Gabor Arany was so much less of a stunt and so much more of a person, than Mme. della Robbia. The scheme of the play is not original; for the woman who gets her man back is, on the stage at least, a commonplace. The ex-

hibition of a temperamental artist in a huge battle for the rights of domesticity, without sacrifice (not of her art but of her privileges) is the best thing in the play except Miss Varesi's acting. That, a little over-pointed, a little too excited on the second night, is very fine. It, too, has behind it the intelligence which synthesizes small strokes and makes character.

THE moving picture, I am given to understand, is no longer a mortal enemy of the stage, and the fresh orientation ought to give our enthusiasts for the theatre something to think about. For the embrace of the moving picture threatens to be the final clutch, the close-up and the fade-out—of the theatre. As an enemy the moving picture put the theatre through its paces, a little. As a friend it is simply going to insist that no play be produced (and eventually that none be written) without the picture in mind. I have even heard that a well established publishing house has been sold to the cinema, in the sense that hereafter its many and multi-coloured magazines will serve the ends of the picture producers, be storehouses not of sensation but of scenarios.

Frankly it does not matter half of one bit. At least it wouldn't if the movies got anything like a decent return for this, for the popular art which can not persist in the face of a little adversity is hardly worth saving. The dramatists will still write bad plays for the theatre; the scenario writers will still furbish them up for the screen. And we shall be very much where we were before until some one comes to galvanize our playwrights and make them at least fit companions for the real artists of the theatre whom we are producing.

GILBERT SELDES

COMMENT

BY far the most entertaining publication we have seen in many years is a broadside called *Le Coq* issued in Paris by a group of musicians who like each other. Darius Milhaud, whose ballet, *Le Boeuf sur le Toit*, has been produced at the Coliseum in London under the Americanist title of *The Nothing-Doing Bar*; Erik Satie; Jean Cocteau; Francis Poulenc; Georges Auric; and the Swiss Honegger are among the names. As to music, little of it appears, but these men have a gift of phrase and an exuberance of imagination which is almost terrifying. After furiously asserting that they found no school and issue no manifesto, they reproach Dada for timidity. No Dadaiste has yet committed suicide, they complain, nor killed a spectator. Under the rubric *Dernières Nouvelles* we find that the six musicians are no longer interested in harmonic counterpoint, and these verbless declarations: *Fondation de la Ligue Anti-Moderne. Retour à la poésie. Disparition du gratte-ciel. Réapparition de la rose.* We doubt whether they can do it, but they can write epigrams. As, for example: "*Ravel refuse la Légion d'Honneur mais toute sa musique l'accepte,*" M. Satie's possible proof that truth and beauty are not necessarily the same. M. Raymond Radiguet writes "*Depuis vingt on me force à penser. J'en ai mal à la tête.*" And M. Satie gives the psychological clue to the whole in his precious confession that all through his youth people told him that he "would see" when he was fifty. "I am fifty. I have seen nothing."

It is perhaps the virtue of the foreign tongue which makes so many French and Italian experiments in literature acceptable to the English-speaking panjandrums of literature. Since we are the commanding races, without a doubt the success of these ideas will ultimately depend on us, and F. T. Marinetti will do well not to translate "*Les Mots en Liberté futuristes*" into Futurist Words at Liberty. For then we would understand and might object.

Signor Marinetti can hardly be accused of vagueness, at any rate. He proposes to set words free by destroying syntax. The verb must be used exclusively in the infinitive, because that form alone

can give the sense of the continuity of life. The adjective and the adverb go. No more punctuation—to give place and direction we will use certain mathematical signs. All order is condemned as a product of our underhand intelligence and therefore our images must be orchestrated with a maximum of disorder. We are to arrive at an intuitive psychology of matter and at a wireless imagination.

It was in an aeroplane that Signor Marinetti arrived at these conclusions—for poetry only. He uses the common terms in explaining the ideas which we have sketched here. It is hardly necessary to comment upon them—M. Benda's *Belphegor* is sufficient analysis and a sufficient statement of the traditional attack. We should only like to add—and we have some experience in the matter—that the typographic revolution proposed in the same book would go far to relieve an editor from the harrassment of misprints. He could in time persuade himself that they were exceedingly well meant.

THE Italian Letter which appears elsewhere in this issue of THE DIAL was written from the islet of Comacina in the Lake of Como. This happy place has passed through the hands of two monarchs since it was bequeathed to Albert of the Belgians by Signor Augusto Caprani, and is now to be made into a private little kingdom for artists of every kind, and, we trust, of every nationality. Such is the intention of the King of Italy, and the imagination boggles a little at the thought. That artists should be free does not necessarily imply that they should be rent-free. Even that blessed condition (we are dimly aware of a housing shortage but we think it more decent to say nothing about it) might be spoiled a bit if all the artist's neighbours were equally artists and equally unable to show their paintings to the landlord or read their plays to the slavey. Still Como, delectable vocable as it is, will have, on Comacina, halls for exhibitions and recitals, so life will not be all wine and roses. The artists will have to observe each other, and cursed capitalism will undoubtedly invent other tortures for them.

AMONG the books which are nice to take in hand and which always yield a surplus of pleasure because they are well and intelligently made, are those on photography. The 1920 issue of

Pictorial Photography (published by Tennant and Ward) has ornamented a none too tidy table for many months; Arthur Hammond's Pictorial Composition in Photography (issued by the American Photographic Publishing Company) is a more scientific volume, since the former is composed almost entirely of specimens, and the latter uses reproductions only to illustrate the very sound and interesting principles which the author has worked out. There is still much of the tawdry and the meretricious in photography, but there is such a growing dominance of craftsmanship that the ancient controversy about photography being an art has virtually ceased to exist. The portrait photographers have learned much from moving picture lighting, but the best of them have learned more from the capacities of their own instruments and from the willingness of their sitters to abide by expert judgements. The thing that makes one so confident about photography is the respect which good photographers have for the other arts—an attitude of mind not too frequently found among practitioners.

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